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FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

ARABIA

(Persian Gulf, Saudi Arabia and the Yemen)

PART 7

January to December 1953

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ARABIA (PERSIAN GULF, SAUDI ARABIA AND THE YEMEN)—PART 7

CHAPTER I—PERSIAN GULF
GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

EA 1011/1

No. 1

PERSIAN GULF: ANNUAL REVIEW FOR 1952

Sir R. Hay to Mr. Eden. (Received 16th February)

(No. 11. Confidential) Bahrain,
Sir, 12th February, 1953.

I have the honour to transmit herewith a political review of events in the Persian Gulf during the year 1952.

2. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassadors in Bagdad, Jedda, Beirut and Damascus, the Head of the British Middle East Office, Fayid, and the Head of the British Middle East Office's Development Division, Her Majesty's Consul-General, Basra, the United Kingdom High Commissioners in New Delhi and Karachi, the Governor of Aden, the Senior Naval Officer, Persian Gulf (with a separate copy for transmission to the Commander-in-chief, East Indies), the Senior Royal Air Force Officer, Persian Gulf (with a separate copy for transmission to the Air Officer Commanding, Iraq).

I have, &c.

W. R. HAY.

Enclosure in No. 1

Persian Gulf: Annual Review for 1952

General

The arrival of a Saudi Governor at Buraimi at the end of August has had a disturbing effect on some of the tribes of the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman and of the Trucial Shaikhdoms. Otherwise the year has been a peaceful one. Relations between Her Majesty's Government's representatives and the various rulers have been good and the latter, generally speaking, have shown no inclination to evade their obligations. There has been no serious agitation amongst the peoples of the various shaikhdoms against their rulers or against Her Majesty's Government, though there has been a certain amount of seething in the boom town of Kuwait, where the rapacity of the shaikhs and the discontent of the people at what they regard as the slow rate of progress in the development schemes and at the large number of foreigners in their midst make the situation uneasy. The oil-producing Shaikhdoms of Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar remain

economically very prosperous, and abundance of money and shortage of man-power have led to large increases in wages. In Muscat and the Trucial Shaikhdoms, where no oil has yet been found, economic conditions are poor and the standard of living low. The port of Dubai suffered in particular from a great falling off in the trade with Persia owing to the economic decline of the latter country. The situation has, however, been relieved by immigration on a fairly large scale to the more prosperous shaikhdoms. During the year the Bahrain Petroleum Company and Petroleum Development (Qatar) (Limited) followed the example set by the Kuwait Oil Company at the end of last year and entered into agreements with the rulers from whom they hold concessions for the sharing of profits on a fifty-fifty basis, thereby greatly increasing the revenues of both of the States concerned. Apart from some labour troubles in Qatar the relations between the oil companies and the local population have on the whole been good, but both the Kuwait Oil Company and the Bahrain Petroleum Company are becoming increasingly aware of the necessity of showing more sympathy with local aspirations if this happy state of affairs is to be maintained. One of the most important events amongst the oil companies during the year was the abandonment of the Superior Oil Company of America of their sea-bed concessions for Qatar, Dubai and Abu Dhabi. The Qatar sea-bed concession has been taken over by Shell under the name of the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company, and that for Dubai by Mr. Heseldin, the general manager of the Iraq Petroleum Company's associated companies in the Gulf, pending the formation of a new company to work it. The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company are negotiating for the Abu Dhabi concession. Petroleum Development (Trucial Coast) have obtained concessions for the sea-bed of some of the smaller Trucial Coast Shaikhdoms. No oil has yet been discovered by the American Independent Oil Company in the neutral zone. There has been little development in the field of civil aviation.

The British Overseas Airways Corporation's Comet service is greatly appreciated. The airfield at Dohah has been extended and improved and the question of a new airfield at Kuwait is being urgently considered as the local authorities have asked for the present airfield to be vacated as the ground is required for their town development plan. A new Civil Aerodrome Commandant has been appointed at Bahrain with supervisory powers over the other airfields in the Gulf, excluding those in Muscat territory. It has been agreed that the Ruler of Bahrain should administer his own internal postal services and use his own stamps for them. The Persian Gulf Lighting Service has replaced the old *Nearchus* by an up-to-date new vessel, the *Relume*, and has constructed or is constructing new lighthouses on several of the islands. Owing to the rupture of diplomatic relations with Persia it has had to abandon its servicing of buoys and lights on the Persian coast, except for the light vessel off Qais Island, which it is still maintaining.

Bahrain

Shaikh Salman was awarded an honorary K.C.M.G. in the New Year's Honours. He was particularly gratified by a brief visit which their Royal Highnesses the Duchess of Kent and the Duke of Kent paid to Bahrain on their way to Malaya. He paid an official visit to Kuwait towards the end of summer, but otherwise has been in Bahrain throughout the year. He continues to take a very active part in all the affairs of his Government and his occasional violent outbursts of bad temper are evidence of the strain he is suffering as a result of overwork. Under the malign influence of his lawyers, Mr. Ballantyne and his son, he is becoming increasingly zealous of his position as Ruler of Bahrain and beginning to question the control which we exercise over foreigners here. In particular, he has protested strongly against a Queen's Regulation which covers the grant of residence permits by us to foreigners who wish to stay on the island. Jurisdiction over nationals of Saudi Arabia, Muscat, the Yemen and other Persian Gulf Shaikhdoms was transferred to him during the year and he has now asked for the transfer also of jurisdiction over Persians. He is bitterly jealous of Qatar and the fact that the Bahrain Petroleum Company can only produce about 1½ million tons of oil for him as against Qatar's 3 or 4 million tons has seriously prejudiced his relations with the company. He has on two or three occasions endeavoured to

obtain our concurrence in the rebuilding of Zubarah in Qatar in contravention of the settlement reached in 1950. In spite of all this our personal relations with him have been excellent and there is no doubt of his earnest desire for the continuance of good relations with Her Majesty's Government. Sir Charles Belgrave, who was awarded the K.B.E. in the Birthday Honours, has now been the ruler's adviser for over twenty-six years. Under his wise administration Bahrain continues to progress steadily. Several new schools have been opened, including three village schools which the Bahrain Petroleum Company built and presented to the Government. A number of new roads have been made and much is being done to improve the appearance of the capital, Manamah. A firm of consultants have given their report on the project for the construction of a pier near Jufair. There is inevitably a certain amount of anti-British and anti-ruling family talk and occasional anonymous letters are received demanding the removal of the adviser, but, so far as it is known, there is no really serious political agitation. Complaints are directed mainly against the Bahrain Government's hospital in spite of substantial increases in its staff, the ruler's courts and inadequate accommodation in the schools. Amongst the local population there is a certain amount of jealousy of Kuwait and fear that Bahrain will not be able to keep pace with it in the matter of development. As a result of the disagreement between the Sunnis and Shiah in Manamah over the distribution of seats, it has not been possible to hold municipal elections and the municipality is being administered by a caretaker committee of six Sunnis.

Kuwait

Shaikh Abdullah Salim was awarded an honorary K.C.M.G. in the Birthday Honours. He continues to take frequent holidays on his island of Failaikah and in more distant places. He has visited Iraq, Bahrain and Qatar and was away on a fairly long stay in India when the year closed. He has suffered much from some trouble in one of his feet, probably gout, but will not see a doctor. He is genuinely anxious to do his best for his State but rather bored with ruling and unwilling to take the strong action necessary to curb the activities of his relations. On two or three occasions he has even threatened to abdicate. The two most prominent shaikhs are the ruler's uncle, Abdullah Mubarak, and his half-brother Fahad. The former ranks as Number Two

in the State. He has been acting for the ruler during the latter's absence in India and is generally regarded as his probable successor. He is in control of public security and all the police or gendarmerie outside Kuwait town. The forces under his control now amount to 1,200 men and we are providing him with armoured cars. Though well disposed to us he has an extravagant and flamboyant personality and is showing signs of megalomania. He visited the United Kingdom and the United States during the year. Fahad, the leader of the opposite faction of the State, betrays obvious signs of his slave origin and has hitherto been regarded as not in the line of succession, though he almost certainly has ambitions in that direction. He has a strong personality combined with limited intelligence. He is not well disposed towards us and has been flirting with the Americans. He has been interfering a great deal in the development programme to the State's and our detriment. We made ineffectual efforts to persuade the ruler to curb his activities or to send him away from Kuwait for the time being. These efforts having failed, Colonel Crichton, the Controller of Finance, and General Hasted, the State's Chief Engineer, have adopted a policy of appeasement towards him, which has had some success and he is now chairman of the Development Board. The State's annual revenues from oil now amount to about £50 million and the ruler has given his blessing to a proposal to set up a board in London to control the investment of the large surpluses which will accrue. The final details, however, still remain to be settled. Meanwhile, he has withdrawn the approval which he originally gave to a scheme whereby Colonel Crichton would control the finances of all the departments of his Government, and as a result the internal financial administration of the State is still in a chaotic condition. In spite of this and of Fahad's frequent interferences, local development has made substantial if not very orderly progress. An enormous new secondary school, with a long row of hostels and huge distillation and power plants, are nearing completion. A few new roads have been made, a magnificent town-planning scheme has been evolved and initial steps are being taken for the development of the port. A number of British firms have obtained contracts for these works in association with Kuwaiti contractors. Swarms of business men are visiting the place looking for pickings. The town is full of the British employees of contracting firms, who

take up all the available accommodation. The local population have as yet derived no benefit from the main projects, which are not yet completed, and an impression is gaining ground that we are exploiting Kuwait for our own benefit. It is hoped, however, that when an abundant supply of drinking water and power becomes available in a few months' time this impression will be removed. The general situation in Kuwait, however, with its well-intentioned but tired ruler, its rival and ambitious shaikhs and its scheming merchants, will long give cause for anxiety.

Qatar

Shaikh Ali, with his increasing wealth, becomes more and more self-opinionated and difficult. He spends an enormous amount of money, mostly in giving away presents to worthless relations and other people. We have reluctantly agreed to substantial increases in his family's allowances and are trying to persuade him to limit his own personal allowance. He always tries to place the responsibility on us where any action he may have to take which is likely to be unpopular with his relations or subjects. His old father is still very much alive but does not exercise quite so much influence in affairs of State. In such matters Shaikh Ali is almost completely dominated by the leading local merchant Abdullah Darwish, a very clever man who fortunately appears to be concerned more with his own financial advantage than with politics. At the end of the year Shaikh Ali was on a visit to Saudi Arabia with his father and the pomp and ceremony with which he was received there is likely to make him even more swollen-headed. The only serious trouble which occurred in the peninsula during the year was when some members of the ruling family beat up the Director of Customs and defied the ruler. One of Her Majesty's ships was sent to Dohah but the local police had succeeded in coping with the situation before it arrived, thereby greatly increasing their own prestige in the eyes of the ruler. The ruler agreed to the appointment of a new adviser, Mr. Hancock, who had considerable experience in the Sudan, and the latter arrived in Dohah at the beginning of November. A British doctor who was appointed as the State medical adviser in the spring resigned after a month or two and some months elapsed before a successor could be found. Mr. Hale, late of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, was appointed as State engineer in February and two or three other British engineers have since been

engaged to assist him. A new fish, meat and vegetable market has been completed and some of the roads have been improved. Work on a power house has started and a water supply scheme for Dohah is under discussion with a firm of consultants. In March Shaikh Ali issued a decree abolishing slavery in his State and paid compensation to the owners of slaves.

Trucial Coast Shaikhdoms

Kalba has ceased to exist as an independent shaikhdom and, with the agreement of the Council of Trucial Coast Rulers, has been amalgamated with Sharjah. The murderer of Shaikh Hamad, the previous ruler who had usurped the shaikhdom, left peacefully at the beginning of July and the Ruler of Sharjah took over without opposition. In March Shaikh Muhammad of Fujairah, which has long been independent of any of the Trucial Coast Rulers, entered into treaty relations with Her Majesty's Government, thereby bringing into being a new Trucial Coast Shaikhdom. The total number of shaikhdoms therefore remains at seven as before. There have been no changes so far as any of the other rulers are concerned. Shaikh Shakhbut of Abu Dhabi paid a prolonged visit to India for health reasons during the latter half of the year. He is on bad terms with his brothers and unpopular with the tribesmen on account of his meanness and inaccessibility. He is bitterly opposed to the Saudis and on that account closely attached to us though often obstinate in accepting advice. Shaikh Said of Dubai is becoming more and more infirm and his son Rashid is the real ruler. Shaikh Saqr, the young Ruler of Sharjah, is developing well. He appears to have gained complete control over Kalba and has established his authority over the oasis of Dhaid. He is now busy trying to encroach on Muscat territory. He is more intelligent and progressive than the other rulers and is anxious to restore the prosperity of Sharjah as a port. Shaikh Saqr of Ras al Khaimah is most unimpressive but from time to time takes unexpectedly strong action. In March he made a night attack on Rams and established his rule over the village. The local shaikhs who fled tried to effect a come-back in July and one of Her Majesty's ships and a party of levies had to be sent to the place to assist in the restoration of order. Nothing of importance has occurred at Ajman or Umm al Qaiwain. One of the most important developments of the year was the formation

of a Council of Trucial Coast Rulers for the discussion of matters of common interest to the shaikhdoms and the encouragement of mutual support and joint action. It has met on two occasions. The Trucial Oman Levies have been raised to a strength of nearly 100 and have established a number of outposts. It is unfortunate that the political situation has seriously interfered with their training. On 31st August Turki bin Ataishan arrived at the village of Hamasah in the Buraimi oasis as the Saudi Governor of the area. This village is actually in Muscat territory, but most of the rest of the oasis is subject to the authority of Zaid, brother of Shakhbut of Abu Dhabi, who lives in one of the villages there. A party of levies was despatched in September to support Zaid's authority and is still located there. Many persons from the Trucial Coast have visited Turki to pay their respects, and a number of the Beni Qitab tribesmen, who owe allegiance to Sharjah, and of the Khawatir tribesmen, who owe allegiance to Ras al Khaimah, have gone over to him and been despatched by him to Riyadh. The attitude of the rulers in this emergency has on the whole been satisfactory. Abu Dhabi has taken action to strengthen his authority in Liwa and Bainuna, and Sharjah and Ras al Khaimah are doing what they can to restrain their tribesmen. There has, however, been a good deal of pro-Saudi propaganda in Dubai and the attitude of Ajman is somewhat doubtful. Everything possible is being done to support the rulers whose territories are threatened by Saudi encroachment. In addition steps are under consideration for promoting social progress on the Trucial Coast. The hospital at Dubai is doing good work but it is not as popular as it might be and is short of funds. Embryo schools are in existence at Sharjah and Dubai and both rulers are anxious to build up-to-date schools but have difficulty in finding the money required for the purpose.

Muscat

The Sultan remained at Muscat throughout the year. Efforts made in the early part of the year to persuade him to assert himself in the Buraimi area failed and as a result when Turki arrived in Hamasah at the end of August all the local shaikhs went over to him, except Saqr bin Sultan of the Naim. The Sultan despatched a small party to support Saqr and gave him some financial assistance, but otherwise his only idea of dealing with the situation was the collection of an overwhelming force. He moved

British officer, Captain Maxwell, to command it.

Foreign Relations

No progress has been made in the settlement of the various disputes over boundaries and islands with Saudi Arabia and, owing to Turki's incursion into Buraimi, the situation has greatly deteriorated. As decided at the discussions with the Amir Faisal in London in August 1951 on the subject of the land boundaries of Qatar and the Trucial Coast Shaikhdoms, a conference was held at Dammam in January and February. As the Saudis insisted on something in the nature of a plebiscite being held in the disputed area and showed no readiness to compromise, it proved abortive, but at the end of it it was agreed that the restrictions on the operations of oil companies and the movements of forces in the disputed areas, which had been accepted by both sides at the London Conference, should remain in force pending further negotiations. Nothing further happened until the end of August, when Turki walked into Buraimi. A strong protest was made and his withdrawal demanded, but the Saudis refused to give way and, as has been narrated earlier, in October a stand-still agreement was reached. Subsequently a proposal was made that the whole dispute over land boundaries of Qatar, the Trucial States and Muscat should be referred to arbitration. This was rejected and at the end of the year it was decided to renew it. Owing to the deadlock reached with the Saudis over the land boundaries no further attempt has been made to settle the disputes over the ownership of islands or the sea-bed boundaries, and the only new development is a Saudi claim that the islands of Qaru and Umm al Maradin, which were recognised in the Anglo-Turkish Convention of 1913 as belonging to Kuwait, appertain to the Neutral Zone. The Persians continue to ventilate their claim to Bahrain. In the summer one of Her Majesty's ships paid a visit to Sirri Island in ignorance of the fact that it is generally treated as belonging to Persia and a protest was subsequently received. Towards the end of the year Shaikh Rashid of Dubai was refused permission to land at Lingah, where he had gone on a hunting expedition, because of his connexion with the British. Although no progress has been made with the proposal to demarcate the land boundary between Iraq and Kuwait, relations with Iraq have on the whole been satisfactory. The Ruler of Kuwait visited Bagdad in

slowly and it was not until towards the middle of October that the tribesmen who remained loyal to him began to assemble in the Batinah. By this time it had become clear that, if he were to advance, a serious clash with the tribes who had gone over to the Saudis and probably with the Saudis themselves would ensue. In order to avoid this eventuality, the results of which might be far-reaching, a standstill agreement was reached with the Saudis whereby the forces in Buraimi were to remain there but were not to be reinforced and life there was to revert to normal pending negotiations for a peaceful settlement of the affair. The Sultan accepted this arrangement and dispersed the tribesmen he had collected in the Batinah. He was subsequently asked to agree to our proposing to the Saudis a settlement of the dispute by arbitration, which he did with the greatest reluctance. In the interior the old Imam is still alive though in poor health, and there has been much speculation about his successor. His attitude towards Turki's incursion has been somewhat enigmatic, but on the whole he appears to be co-operating with the Sultan. Although he has sent emissaries to Ibn Saud, he collected a tribal force at the same time as the Sultan and dispersed it when the Sultan informed him of the stand-still agreement. A number of shaikhs and tribesmen from the interior have been to see Turki and received presents, but with the exception of Sulaiman bin Himyar, the leader of the Ghafiri faction, most of the Ibadhi tribes have remained loyal to the Sultan and the Imam. Sulaiman went to see Turki and was sent on by him to see the King at Riyadh. It is reported that on his return the Imam declared him an infidel and ordered that, if possible, he should be killed. During the year Petroleum Development (Muscat and Oman) put to the Sultan a scheme which they had been maturing for some time for the exploitation of the "Huqf" area (the area of the mainland of the Sultanate opposite Masirah Island). There was reason to hope at the end of the year that their proposals will be acceptable to the Sultan and that exploration of this area will begin during the year 1953. There is little to report about the territory over which the Sultan's effective control is concerned. There have been no social or political developments and the year has been one of stagnation. The Sultan makes little effective use of his Foreign Minister, Mr. Woods-Ballard. He is, however, raising a small force to improve the administration of the Batinah and has obtained the services of a

March and was received with much ceremony. He reached an informal agreement with the Iraqis on various matters such as the abolition of visas, the reduction of postal and cable rates and customs arrangements, and steps are being taken to make these agreements effective by formal instruments negotiated by Her Majesty's Government on the ruler's behalf. The Regent and Nuri Pasha visited Kuwait and Bahrain in the summer and showered decorations on the rulers, their families and their officials. A visit by Muhammad Yunus, the new Indian Chargé d'Affaires at Bagdad, was paid to the Gulf during May shortly before his relief, but nothing has been seen of his successor. The terms of a treaty between India and Muscat have been agreed, but so far as is known it has not yet been signed. An approach was made by Her Majesty's Consul-General to the Sultan on behalf of the Government of Pakistan on the subject of the sale of Gwadar. He refused to sell the place but gave an indication that he might

be willing to lease it to Pakistan either direct or through Her Majesty's Government. Relations with the local authorities of the United States have remained cordial. Visits were exchanged between the Political Resident and the United States Consul-General at Dhahran, Mr. Bishop, who is helpful and co-operative and less inquisitive than his predecessor. A United States ship wearing the flag of the Rear-Admiral who holds the appointment of Commander, Middle East Force, is more or less permanently in the Gulf and visits each shaikhdom and Muscat roughly twice a year. We have received visits from a number of United States destroyers on their way back from Korea to the United States. The French Consul at Basra visited Qatar, where he was interested in the French tankers that call at Umm Said, and Bahrain, where he distributed medals and certificates to those who rendered assistance at the time of the Air France crashes in 1951.

EA 1081/128

No. 2

**CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND
HIS HIGHNESS THE SULTAN OF MUSCAT ON 24th
FEBRUARY, 1953**

Mr. Eden to Sir R. Hay (Bahrain)

(No. 30. Confidential) *Foreign Office,
Sir, 24th February, 1953.*

I entertained the Sultan of Muscat to luncheon to-day, and afterwards brought him back to the Foreign Office for further discussion. Although the luncheon party was small (the guests including only the Permanent Under-Secretary and three senior officials of the Foreign Office, as well as Admiral of the Fleet Sir John Cunningham, Chairman of the Iraq Petroleum Company) His Highness was uncommunicative, but he spoke with great eloquence during our subsequent conversation, which was private.

2. His Highness referred at once to the situation in Buraimi. He saw no objection to our trying to settle the frontier dispute by diplomatic means, but he objected

strongly to Turki's presence in his territory. He thought it would be an easy matter for us to remove Turki or to allow him to do so. He had, however, accepted the advice of Her Majesty's Government and had informed his people that the matter had now been taken out of his hands. The resulting situation was most damaging to his position. His people could not understand why he was doing nothing. In the meanwhile Turki, under cover of the Standstill Agreement, was receiving emissaries from the neighbouring tribes, some of whom were being seduced from their allegiance to Muscat. His Highness referred particularly to the defection of Suleiman bin Himyar. This man had actually gone to Riyadh and as a result the Imam had given orders for him to be killed.

3. I told the Sultan that it was quite true that I had been obliged last autumn to advise against driving Turki out of Buraimi. Since then, however, our position in the Trucial States had been considerably strengthened by measures of which His Highness was well aware, and it would be strengthened still further. It seemed to me that Turki's position must be weakened accordingly.

4. The Sultan did not think that there would be any appreciable improvement in his own position unless either Turki were removed or His Highness was able to assert his influence in some tangible form. For this purpose he propounded the idea of building up as soon as possible a force of 1,500 men with the assistance of Her Majesty's Government. This assistance could be given in the form of an advance of oil royalties and if such a force were raised the oil company could operate wherever it considered the prospects favourable. British advisers would be welcome to direct the spending of these revenues, which would bring prosperity to Muscat. In view of the long tradition of co-operation between Muscat and Her Majesty's Government nothing would be more natural or acceptable.

5. I remarked that this was a new idea, but that I would be pleased to examine it in more detail. It might be that it would interest the oil company with whom, with the Sultan's permission, I would propose to discuss it. The company had, however, already offered to assist with the raising and equipping of a force of 400 men for the Huqf. The project was well on its way. Would the formation of this force have a favourable effect on the Sultan's tribes in the North? His Highness seemed doubtful. In reply to my question whether it would be wise to launch the oil company in Central Oman, the Sultan indicated that he saw no objection provided the larger force had been raised in accordance with his suggestion. He affected to believe that opinion in general was now ready to accept the

benefits of the production of oil and that the Imam, whose influence he said was much reduced, would not be able to arouse any opposition to His Highness's will.

6. Reverting to the question of Buraimi, I assured the Sultan that we were determined that Turki's influence should be eliminated. Making it clear that I was only thinking aloud, I said that one course might be to place our forces in positions where they would completely dominate Turki. If the Sultan could also strengthen his position on the other side, we could together make Turki's position quite untenable. The Sultan repeated that what would help him most would be to raise a force of 1,500 men. However, it would be very useful if our forces could also show themselves in Muscat territory. He would welcome flights by the R.A.F. and visits from the armoured cars. I said that this could certainly be arranged.

7. Summing up, I told the Sultan that I could not wait indefinitely for the Saudis to reply to our Note. We would, together with the United States, continue to urge the Saudis to accept our offer. I emphasised that Ibn Saud was our friend. As to Turki I was less anxious in view of the increase in the strength of our position, and I was sure that the visits by our forces to the Sultan's domains would help still further. In the meantime the Huqf project would go ahead. Finally, I would have an urgent examination made into the question of raising the larger force referred to by the Sultan. If His Highness were still in this country when I returned from the United States I would welcome the opportunity of a further discussion on all these matters.

8. Before leaving the Sultan agreed to come to the Foreign Office for detailed discussions with members of the Department.

9. I am sending a copy of this despatch to Her Majesty's Consul-General at Muscat, to Her Majesty's Ambassadors at Jeddah and Washington and to the Head of the B.M.E.O.

I am, &c.

ANTHONY EDEN.

CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND
THE SULTAN OF MUSCAT ON 20th MARCH, 1953

Mr. Eden to Sir R. Hay (Bahrain)

(No. 46. Secret)
Sir,

*Foreign Office,
20th March, 1953.*

The Sultan of Muscat called on me this afternoon. I told him that there had been developments in the last few days regarding the frontier dispute, some of them good. There had already been a considerable increase of our available forces and, as His Highness would have heard from the Department, we felt justified in taking steps to cut off Turki's supplies and to stop reinforcements reaching him even through disputed territory.

2. Emphasising that what I would now tell him was to be kept completely secret, I said that Ministers had also decided in the near future to place forces at certain points which I indicated on the map, with the object of sealing off the whole area. It was not our intention to denounce any agreement but simply to act. If, however, it later appeared necessary to terminate the Standstill Agreement, I would certainly let the Sultan know. I understood this to be His Highness's wish. The Sultan would realise that the Saudis might well take us to the United Nations but we were satisfied that we had a good case. I still hoped, of course, that the Saudis might accept our offer of arbitration, which would remain open, and it might be unnecessary to use force. If it came to the point, however, I would be glad to know what action the Sultan contemplated on his part.

3. His Highness replied that it would depend on circumstances. He expressed satisfaction at what I had told him, but was clearly reluctant to commit himself. I suggested to the Sultan that he might think it desirable in his own interest to be on the spot in the event of action being necessary, and offered to arrange his journey to suit his convenience. His Highness indicated that he must first complete his medical treatment, that he intended in any case to go to Salalah, not Muscat, and that he was quite content to leave his Minister of the Interior to deal with the situation in the north. I put it to him that on grounds of prestige alone it might be desirable for him to be present when action was taken

against Turki. But he was not to be moved.

4. When we were discussing the points to which our forces might move, the Sultan told me that he had learnt a week ago of a report that the Saudis had attempted to reach Muqshin but, being unable to cross the dunes, had turned back and stopped at a place with a name like Kasaria. He agreed that this might be a Beduin corruption of the place we call Qasaiwara.

5. I then informed the Sultan that a promising candidate had been found to command the Huqf force and would be interviewed on Monday, 23rd March. If he were found suitable, he could wait upon His Highness and, subject to his confirmation, could proceed to Aden at once. I would instruct the Department to arrange his journey immediately.

6. The Sultan reverted to what he calls "his proposal." I said that I regarded Turki and the Huqf as the primary questions and in any case I feared that his project of 1,500 men was too large. The Oil Company were financing the Huqf force and could not be expected to do more. The Sultan pointed out that his proposal contemplated an advance of money to be repaid out of revenue when oil was produced. I admitted that this was so, but suggested that it would be preferable to concentrate on the Huqf. If oil were found there, it might be possible to advance money for, perhaps, a slightly less ambitious project.

7. I assured the Sultan that in my absence the Department would continue to keep in touch with him and to comply with any further wishes he might care to express.

8. I annexe the record of a conversation which the Sultan had previously had with Sir J. Bowker and other officials of the Department. I fear it reveals an unsatisfactory state of mind.

9. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Consul-General at Muscat, Her Majesty's Representatives at Washington and Jedda and to the Head of the British Middle East Office at Fayid.

I am, &c.

ANTHONY EDEN.

The Sultan of Muscat

The Sultan of Muscat called on Sir J. Bowker at the Foreign Office on the afternoon of 18th March at the latter's request. Mr. Ross and Mr. Greenhill were also present.

2. Sir J. Bowker first informed the Sultan that the Secretary of State was hoping to see His Highness in the next few days and had instructed him (Sir J. Bowker) to inform His Highness of certain developments. Sir J. Bowker then said that the Ministers had decided that in regard to the situation in Buraimi a more forward policy should now be adopted. Accordingly the Political Resident had received authority to take action forthwith to prevent supplies and reinforcements from reaching Turki. It was hoped that these measures would make Turki's position extremely difficult, if not untenable. This action, regarding which, of course, complete secrecy must be observed, would not affect the offer to settle the frontier dispute by arbitration. The Sultan expressed satisfaction at these decisions, which he implied were long overdue, and emphasised the damaging effect of the continued presence of Turki in Buraimi. He was glad to know that Turki's supplies were to be cut off, and remarked that most of these came from Dubai and Sharjah. He had been preparing an aide-mémoire on the whole question with a view to seeing the Secretary of State again, but he implied that it would not now be necessary for him to submit it.

3. The Sultan was then given all available reports about the incursion of Ibn Mansur. The Sultan expressed surprise at the failure to stop the force at Buraimi, but appeared indifferent to the fact that they had moved towards Dhank. He said that they might be proceeding to Upper Dhank where Saqr had his fort, or to the Lower Dhank which was occupied by three small tribes. There was also a Mosque between the two which might be their objective. He was doubtful if resistance would be offered to them, and observed that it would need a leader to rally the tribes. He was informed that Mr. Chauncy was in touch with his Minister of the Interior and that the latter was prepared to take action. He said he was quite content to leave the matter in the hands of his Minister of the Interior and declined an offer of cypher facilities to communicate with him. He agreed, however, that the Minister might be told that His Highness

had been informed of the situation. In reply to a question he confirmed that the Minister had full authority to take such steps as he considered appropriate, including action to expel the Saudis. The Sultan said that this latest development was the direct result of Turki having been allowed to establish himself at Buraimi and he spoke of the restraints which had been laid upon him by Her Majesty's Government last autumn. As he appeared to be under the impression that he was still prevented by the Standstill Agreement from sending forces west of the Jebel Hajar, Mr. Ross pointed out that the Standstill Agreement applied only to Buraimi. It was true that Sir R. Hay had asked the Sultan not to send forces into the interior without prior consultation, but there was no absolute prohibition. The Sultan continued to maintain that Her Majesty's Government were responsible for the present situation and that it was up to them to remedy it.

4. The Sultan was informed of the exchanges between Sir R. Hay and Salih bin Isa reported in Bahrain telegrams Nos. 198, 215, 218 and 219. The Sultan said that Salih was a self-seeker and clearly had little authority or standing. Salih was not entitled to take the lead in speaking about the Treaty of Sib which had been signed by eighteen chiefs, of which Salih's father was only one. The Imam, too, in whose name Salih was claiming to act had been only one of the signatories and he had signed as a tribal leader, not as Imam. The Sultan strongly advised against giving Salih a copy of the Treaty or indeed anything whatever. He reluctantly agreed that the Imam's letter (Bahrain telegram No. 198) should be acknowledged and that an oral reply could be given to Salih to the effect that as far as Her Majesty's Government were aware, the Treaty of Sib was still in force. He would obviously have preferred to omit any mention of the Treaty.

5. The Sultan was then asked what reply should be given to Salih's question whether the Sultan would undertake to defend the Omanis against outside aggression. The Sultan clearly regarded this as an improper question which merited no reply. If a reply had to be given it should be to the effect that all Omani peoples should unite to defend themselves against aggression. It was not for one man, but for all the tribes together to protect the Oman. Salih could not be given sole authority in the interior and he, the Sultan, was not prepared to enhance Salih's position. Letters from the

Imam were worthless. If Salih threatened to go to Riyadh, he was welcome to go and take the consequences. The Sultan clearly thought he would not do so.

6. Mr. Ross then gave the Sultan the details of Salih's proposed pact (Bahrain telegram No. 215). The Sultan was unimpressed. He considered that the pact had little substance and that Salih's main motive was to increase his own importance. He said that those involved in the pact were allies who would automatically come together in times of danger without such agreement. None of the leaders of the interior were included. He felt he should not become involved in what was a purely personal arrangement between Hinawi Shaikhs. The question of his approval did not arise. The pact might have been useful last August for resistance to Turki, and he advised against the participation of Shakbut or Abu Dhabi. He did not feel that the pact would be any good as a nucleus to which others could adhere.

7. Sir J. Bowker then informed the Sultan that circumstances might arise in which we would feel it desirable to declare that we regarded the Buraimi Standstill Agreement as being terminated and to

reserve freedom of action. The Sultan showed considerable interest and said he would like to hear from us in advance in writing when the Agreement was denounced or terminated. He gave the impression that once the Agreement was out of the way he might be prepared to take some forceful action. He was prepared to admit that Salih's pact might be useful in this connexion.

8. Mr. Ross asked whether in view of the incursion to Dhank, we could inform the Saudis that our action taken to cut off Turki was with the Sultan's approval. The Sultan assented.

9. Sir J. Bowker then enquired whether, in view of the circumstances, the Sultan did not consider that he ought to return to his territories. The Sultan showed no anxiety to leave. He said that he had not yet decided when to return and in any case could not do so at once. He concluded by saying that the remedy to the situation lay in the hands of Her Majesty's Government and that he was grateful for the information which he had received and would look forward to meeting the Secretary of State again.

freedom of action in regard to the Agreement, it follows that Your Highness could also reserve freedom of action. This would be entirely agreeable to Her Majesty's Government and if Your Highness will confirm that it is agreeable to you I suggest that the matter may be regarded as satisfactorily settled between us and I will so inform the Saudi Arabian Government.

I venture to recall my suggestion that in exercising freedom of action both Her Majesty's Government and Your Highness should act in concert after previous consultation.

I should be grateful if I might receive an early expression of Your Highness's view on these matters.

Enclosure in No. 4

London,
March 28, 1953.

Said bin Taimur, Sultan of Muscat and Oman to Right Hon. Anthony Eden, H.B.M.'s Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Greetings,

We are in agreement with Your Excellency as to the note which you intend to despatch to the Saudi Arabian Govern-

ment. We observe that as from the date of that note we shall exercise freedom of action in respect of all matters covered by the Standstill Agreement which we agreed to in October 1952 on your advice.

We agree that before taking any action as far as the Standstill Agreement is concerned there should in our mutual interest be previous consultation between Her Majesty's Government and ourselves as requested.

Your sincere friend,
SAID BIN TAIMUR.

EA 1055/10

No. 5

**CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE RULER
OF KUWAIT ON JUNE 10, 1953**

Problems and Difficulties of Kuwait

Sir Winston Churchill to Sir R. Hay (Bahrain)

(No. 97. Confidential) *Foreign Office,*
Sir, *June 17, 1953.*

His Highness the Ruler of Kuwait paid a call on me on the 10th June, 1953.

2. After compliments, during which the Ruler stressed the value he attached to the friendship of Her Majesty's Government and expressed his intention of following the example of this country in looking after the welfare of his people, I suggested that His Highness might feel the need for an authoritative adviser on economic and financial matters and that, if he did, Her Majesty's Government would do their utmost to recommend a suitable candidate for such an appointment.

3. His Highness replied that for the present he was very well satisfied with the British advisers which he employed in the Departments of Finance, Public Works and Health. It was his custom to follow the advice that he received and he was well satisfied with its quality. He saw no need for an overall adviser at the present.

4. I took the opportunity to assure His Highness that Her Majesty's Government would protect his territory from any attack.

5. On the 12th June the Ruler called upon the Minister of State. Mr. Selwyn Lloyd said that the British people much admired the Ruler's preoccupation with the welfare of his people. The problems facing His Highness were very serious owing to the

great increase in His Highness's revenues from the oil royalties. This sudden access of great wealth must give rise to serious problems, both moral and material, for the people of Kuwait, and, because of the United Kingdom's traditional friendship, Her Majesty's Government felt justified in offering to His Highness some advice.

6. Mr. Selwyn Lloyd said that Her Majesty's Government greatly welcomed His Highness's decision to entrust his surplus revenues to an investment board. This was a very wise decision, but it appeared to Her Majesty's Government that the necessary next step was to make sure that the expenditure of the money being used for developing Kuwait and for improving the condition of its people was wisely directed. A few years ago there was current in the United Kingdom a phrase about "too much money chasing too few goods." Whenever a large increase in funds occurred there was serious danger of a general rise in prices and consequent fall in the value of money. It was essential therefore that the development of Kuwait should be controlled and directed wisely.

7. The Minister of State said he wished to commend a suggestion which I had briefly made to His Highness. The Departments of Government in Kuwait had in many cases British advisers and also that His Highness was intending to introduce a

EA 1081/332

No. 4

**BURAIMI STANDSTILL AGREEMENT : DECISION BY HER MAJESTY'S
GOVERNMENT AND THE SULTAN OF OMAN AND MUSCAT TO
RESERVE FREEDOM OF ACTION**

Mr. Eden to the Sultan of Muscat and Oman

Foreign Office,
March 29, 1953.

When I had the pleasure of receiving Your Highness on the 20th March, I outlined the steps which Her Majesty's Government proposed to take in the matter of the frontier dispute with the Saudi Arabian Government. In accordance with those proposals, which I understood were agreeable to Your Highness, I intend at the appropriate moment to despatch a note to the Saudi Arabian Government, the main effect of which will be that Her Majesty's Government reserve their freedom of action in regard to all matters covered by the Buraimi Standstill Agreement. Of course, if Her Majesty's Government reserve their

budgetary system, but it would be difficult to make such a system effective and to prevent departmental rivalry unless His Highness was able to exercise effective control over every department. It therefore seemed to Her Majesty's Government that the Ruler would do well to appoint an expert in administration, who would be able to advise him on the control of all his departments and their British advisers. Such a man would have to be outstanding and be one on whom His Highness could rely. If His Highness were to adopt this suggestion, Her Majesty's Government would be ready to recommend the best possible adviser who could be found among the whole of the British public service. Mr. Selwyn Lloyd added that I would take a personal interest in finding a suitable man.

8. A number of British firms were operating in Kuwait. These firms had naturally their own interests. It would therefore be of assistance to His Highness to have an adviser who was entirely unconnected with such interests.

9. The problems and difficulties of Kuwait were increasing and would continue to increase with the rise in the oil revenues. Mr. Selwyn Lloyd was glad to hear that His Highness was satisfied with Colonel Crichton's advice on financial matters, but the problems had grown much greater since Colonel Crichton was appointed and the new situation might require new methods. Her Majesty's Government had considered very carefully before offering this advice to His Highness. They had considerable experience in this kind of problem and they felt sure that the best help they could give to His Highness was by finding him a suitable adviser if His Highness decided that he needed one.

10. The Ruler thanked the Minister of State for this advice. He agreed that the problems facing Kuwait were increasing and he would think the matter over very carefully. It was necessary, however, to proceed one step at a time.

11. His Highness said that he had two points which he wished to raise himself. He was glad that Mr. Burrows was present because he hoped that he would be able to study these two points carefully before he came out to the Gulf in July. The first was the question of the date gardens belonging to His Highness's family in Iraq. This question had dragged on for many years and he wished earnestly to see it settled. Her Majesty's Government had originally guaranteed the Subah family in the enjoyment of these gardens, but they had in fact lost some of them owing to action in the Iraqi courts. He did not wish to insist that Her Majesty's Government should compensate him for the loss of these gardens, but he earnestly hoped that the matter could be terminated satisfactorily.

12. The second question was that of defining the boundaries of Kuwaiti rights over the Continental Shelf. He was unable to grant concessions for under-sea exploration for oil until this question was settled, and he was most anxious that this should be done without delay.

13. Mr. Burrows undertook to study these two questions carefully before he arrived in the Gulf.

14. I am sending copies of this despatch to the Political Agent at Kuwait, to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Washington and to the Head of the B.M.E.O. at Fayid.

I am, &c.

WINSTON CHURCHILL.

EA 1053/7

No. 6

OBSERVATIONS BY SIR RUPERT HAY ON THE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PERSIAN GULF DURING HIS INCUMBENCY OF THE POST OF POLITICAL RESIDENT

Sir Rupert Hay to Sir Winston Churchill. (Received June 27)

(No. 56. Confidential)

Bahrain,

Sir,

June 25, 1953.

On the termination of my appointment as Political Resident in the Persian Gulf I feel

that you will wish me to submit my observations on the developments which have taken place during my incumbency and to forecast the probable trend of events in the future.

I held the post at Bushire in an acting capacity for eleven months in 1941-42 and was appointed to it substantively on the 16th of May, 1946, so that by the time of my departure I should have held it for a little over eight years in all.

2. Two great changes affecting the Residency itself have taken place during these years. The first of these was the transfer of its headquarters in 1946 from Bushire to Bahrain and the severance of its long-standing connexion with Persia. This change, though it was accompanied to begin with by much inconvenience and discomfort owing to the lack of suitable accommodation in Bahrain, was undoubtedly most desirable. It had been decided on before the war, and subsequent events in Persia have shown that it was fortunate that it was not postponed much longer. The Ruler of Bahrain welcomed the presence of the Residency in his Shaikhdom as increasing its and his importance.

3. The second change was the transfer of responsibility for the Residency from the Government of India to Her Majesty's Government. This took place on the 1st of April, 1947, a few months before our withdrawal from India. For a year we were subordinate to the Commonwealth Relations Office and after that the Foreign Office took us over. Changes in personnel and routine took place gradually and caused the minimum of dislocation. I have found that the Foreign Office takes a closer interest in matters of detail and is more concerned to ensure that the Shaikhdoms are properly administered than the Government of India, who were always most reluctant to interfere in their internal affairs, but there has been no general change of policy and the Residency continues to function in very much the same way as it did before. As was to be expected, all the Gulf Rulers intelligent enough to take an interest in the matter were delighted to learn that their affairs were to be dealt with in direct correspondence with Her Majesty's Government instead of through the Government of India.

4. Amidst wars and revolutions the Gulf Shaikhdoms have shown a surprising political stability. The Rulers generally speaking fear only the intrigues of other members of their own families and there are very few signs of any popular demand for a more democratic form of Government. Fortunately, none of the Rulers are despots and their patriarchal rule suits the small and mixed populations of their States. There is no doubt also that our presence in the Gulf

acts as a restraining influence. However much we may preach democracy throughout the world, the people know that the Rulers have our friendship and support and believe that we should interfere to prevent any agitation against them. The prevailing economic prosperity is a contributing factor. People who are contented and well-fed will not go out of their way to agitate for a change in the form of Government. Lastly, although education is spreading rapidly at the primary and secondary stages, few are anxious to delay their start in life in the present local era of prosperity by indulging in its higher forms. There is little knowledge of political philosophy, and nobody wishes to sacrifice his material prosperity on the altar of political ideas.

5. In our relations with the Shaikhdoms there have been notable developments in Qatar and on the Trucial Coast. In the former in 1948 when the old Shaikh Abdullah bin Jasim asked our agreement to his abdication and the succession of his eldest son Ali we took the opportunity of persuading him to accept the enforcement of three articles of the 1916 Treaty which had been held in abeyance at his request since its signature. The most important of these permitted the stationing of a British representative in Qatar and an agency under a political officer was forthwith established at Dohah. On the Trucial Coast until the early thirties of this century we studiously refrained from all interference with the internal affairs of the Shaikhdoms. So long as the peace was kept at sea they could fight each other as much as they liked by land and we did not hesitate to recognise a Ruler who had acquired power by murder. The construction of an airport at Sharjah and the grant of concessions to an oil company forced us to modify this policy to some extent but even so the affairs of the Shaikhdoms were left for the most part to the tender mercies of an Arab Residency Agent and we only interfered to maintain law and order when our interests were directly threatened. As late as 1946 it was found impossible to prevent Abu Dhabi and Dubai fighting each other by land. Subsequently, however, with the expanding activities of the oil company and in view of our responsibilities for the protection of the Shaikhdoms, we have found ourselves compelled to take a stronger line. Since 1948 we have had a British Political Officer permanently stationed at Sharjah, and in 1951 we established a small force of levies there primarily to suppress the slave traffic which was

causing us concern but also to assist the Rulers in maintaining law and order generally. The force has since been enlarged to enable it to assume the additional task of defending the Shaikhdoms' borders. We have forcibly intervened on two or three occasions to put a stop to tribal fighting, and when the Ruler of Kalba was murdered by a cousin in 1951, we refused to recognise the latter's succession and eventually forced him to withdraw. We are, in effect, in contradistinction to our declared policy in the other Shaikhdoms, tending to treat the Trucial Coast more and more as a protectorate, and whether we like it or not we shall, I feel, find ourselves compelled increasingly to assume responsibility not only for the maintenance of law and order but also for administration and development.

6. The most striking local development in recent years has been the great increase in the revenues and general prosperity which has accrued to the major Gulf Shaikhdoms from the oil industry. The first oil was shipped from Bahrain 1934, and production has continued steadily since then. The State's revenues have recently been nearly doubled by the profit-sharing agreement which was entered into between the Ruler and the Bahrain Petroleum Company in 1952 and now stand at about £3½ million a year. The present Ruler and his father before him with the assistance of their Financial Adviser, Sir Charles Belgrave, who has been here for twenty-seven years, have pursued a policy of orderly development as a result of which it is now possible to claim that Bahrain is the best administered State in the Middle East. Kuwait presents a very different picture. Here the first shipment of oil did not take place till June 1946, but the original Burgan field is an enormous one, and another field has since been discovered, and even at the present rate of production the Ruler's revenue from oil is likely to be in the neighbourhood of £60 million a year. Kuwait is now endeavouring to make up for lost time and a number of ambitious projects are in hand. The Ruler has employed a number of British experts, but they enjoy little or no executive authority, and all State affairs are in the hands of members of the Ruling Family who give full rein to their personal greed and dislike of each other. As a result, conditions at Kuwait at present can only be described as chaotic. The Qatar oil field did not come into production until the beginning of 1950. It is a rich one, and

the Ruler's revenue from it is likely to rise to £6 million within the next two or three years, and may reach a higher figure later. The State is a very primitive one, but the Ruler has employed a British Adviser and a number of British police officers and experts and a beginning has been made of introducing a proper administration where none existed before and of converting the capital Dohah from a village of rubble to a modern town.

7. It will be clear from the above that the oil industry has brought great prosperity to the three oil-producing Shaikhdoms. Everybody is fully employed, and there is in fact a shortage of man-power. Every kind of trade flourishes, and merchants and shopkeepers are all doing good business. The bulk of the ordinary villagers and tribesmen are drawing regular wages from the oil companies. Conditions on the Trucial Coast and in Muscat and Oman are very different, but even there the economic stringency has been relieved by the exodus of thousands of people to obtain employment in the oil-producing Shaikhdoms and Saudi Arabia. For the present, therefore, there appears to be no reason to fear that economic conditions will anywhere lead to political unrest in the near future.

8. The field for oil exploitation has been greatly enlarged by the issue of declarations by the Rulers of the Shaikhdoms claiming jurisdiction over the sea-bed adjoining their territories on the lines of President Truman's famous declaration. All the Rulers, except Kuwait and one or two of the lesser Trucial Coast Shaikhs, have granted oil concessions for their sea-bed, and several new companies are now operating in the Gulf though none of them has yet started to drill. A number of new boundary questions have been created and await settlement.

9. On the cultural side there is little development to report. The Rulers are one and all strict Muslims and extremely conservative. The veil and the prohibition of the consumption of alcohol are rigorously maintained. It is true that there has been a spread of education especially in Bahrain and Kuwait and that in the latter place they are talking of establishing a university, but, as I have already remarked, there is little thirst for education in its higher forms, and the top classes in the secondary schools are poorly attended. Even the presence of the large number of British and Americans employed by the oil companies and other firms has had surprisingly little effect, and

neither they nor the local people appear to desire close social intercourse with each other, to which in any case the veil and prohibition provide an almost insuperable obstacle. There is, however, a much more widespread knowledge of English in Bahrain and Kuwait, and merchants and the younger members of the Ruling Families are showing an ever-increasing affection for foreign travel.

10. In spite of our withdrawal from the Indian subcontinent and later and nearer home the Abadan debacle and notwithstanding the anti-British campaign which is being waged in other Middle East countries and the general spread of anti-Western feeling in Asia, I have been unable to detect any serious decline in British influence in the Gulf Shaikhdoms. The Rulers realise that but for us they would long ago have lost their independence and they and their people are genuinely grateful to us for bringing them scatheless and keeping them supplied through the last war. Further, they are fully aware of the instability or disorder which prevails in neighbouring Middle East countries and appreciate the sense of security which our presence gives them. I cannot pretend that they have any real affection for us, but they probably dislike us less than other "westerners" and they find us useful. It is encouraging to note that leading merchants both in Bahrain and Kuwait are showing an ever-increasing tendency to employ citizens of the United Kingdom in their local businesses.

11. Although the Americans now have an admiral and a warship permanently in the Gulf, a Consul and a Vice-Consul at Kuwait, and large interests and many personnel in the oil companies there are no signs of their influence rivalling ours. Their dollars are appreciated, but they are not liked personally. I am glad to be able to state that I have never come across any evidence of any attempt on their part to undermine our position here and that I have always found their Consular and naval officers and their senior representatives in the oil companies most courteous and co-operative. In fact, I have found American managers of oil companies much easier to deal with than British ones and much less inclined to interfere in local politics.

12. So far as neighbours of the Gulf Shaikhdoms are concerned, the outstanding development has been the great increase in the wealth and importance of Saudi Arabia,

and the substitution of American for British influence there. This makes Ibn Saud's aggressions much more difficult to deal with. He has often been aggressive in the past, especially with regard to Kuwait between the wars, but in those days he was more or less our protégé, and we were able to settle our quarrels with him quietly in a domestic manner without international repercussions. I do not propose to deal with his latest aggressions in detail here, but will content myself with pointing out that our whole position in the Gulf depends on the belief of the Rulers and their people in our ability to protect them against external aggression and that when they lose their confidence in us they will turn elsewhere. I would add that although Ibn Saud is held in the greatest respect throughout the Gulf none of the Rulers, with the possible exception of Qatar, would willingly exchange our tutelage for his suzerainty.

13. Of our other neighbours Iraq has stopped complaining about smuggling by the Kuwaitis and has started to woo Kuwait, whose greatly increased wealth has made closer relations with her desirable. Persia has continued to press her claims to Bahrain and certain islands off the Trucial Coast and to refuse to recognise our position in the Gulf, but this has not affected the relations between the Persians of the eastern littoral of the Gulf and the Shaikhdoms and trade and intercourse continues between them as it must have done for centuries. On the Persian side the trade is mostly of an illicit nature. The relations of the Shaikhdoms with India have been loosened with the departure of the British Government from the latter place and also because they are no longer dependent on her for supplies to the same extent as in the past. They still retain a respect for India, a number of firms have branches in Bombay and most of the pearls found in the Gulf are sent to Bombay for processing. India has no representative of her own in the Shaikhdoms, but deposes one of the staff of her legation in Bagdad to visit them from time to time. A commercial treaty has recently been concluded between India and Muscat but has not yet been ratified. There is little trade with Pakistan, and generally speaking the Shaikhdoms appear to have little interest in her. She too, until recently, has paid little attention to the Gulf since she came into being, but in May of this year we received a visit from her representative in Bagdad, and there are indications

that she intends to cultivate the Shaikhdoms more carefully in future. Her desire to obtain possession of Gwadar on the Baluchistan coast is a bone of contention with Muscat.

14. In the preceding paragraphs I have endeavoured to summarise the developments which have taken place in the Gulf Shaikhdoms during my incumbency as Political Resident and to state the position as I see it to-day. I now turn to the more difficult task of forecasting the future trend of events. Provided that no major catastrophe occurs and provided that we continue to show our ability to protect the Shaikhdoms against external aggression and to ensure reasonable internal security and stability I see no reason why there should be any radical change in our position for another twenty years, though few perhaps will share this optimism. Society has not advanced far beyond the feudal stage and with their strict and unquestioning adherence to the tenets of Islam the bulk of the population are deeply conservative. As I have already pointed out there is little enthusiasm for education in its higher forms, and I think it will be some years before a large enough body of well-educated and politically-minded persons will be evolved to agitate successfully against the power of the Shaikhs and our position, though there will probably be dynastic troubles from time to time and an increase of anti-British talk. Much will depend on the oil industry. Should there be a serious slump accompanied by local economic depression there may well be political agitation. While on this subject I would remark that I consider it unlikely that any of the Rulers will attempt a serious measure of expropriation. They have the example of Persia before their eyes, and I think they all realise that they have not the organisation or the ability to exploit their own oil resources, though they will no doubt increase their demands on the companies whenever occasion arises.

15. We have perhaps more to fear from external pressure than internal influences. There are signs that the Arab League is taking an increasing interest in the Shaikhdoms and that other Middle East countries are casting a jealous eye on their wealth. I feel, personally, that owing to lack of cohesion amongst the Arab States no serious attack on our position is likely to develop unless some superman emerges to unite them. No doubt there will be many criticisms of our "imperialism" and

"colonialism" not only from the Arab States but from further afield.

16. I have assumed that it is our policy to maintain our present position in the Gulf. Not only our oil and civil aviation interests and our concern for the stability of sterling, but our obligations to the Rulers demand this. We should only withdraw under *force majeure* or when it is clear that we are no longer wanted. We should, however, as has already been agreed, do our best to advance the internal independence of the Shaikhdoms while continuing to control their external affairs, police their seas and deal with any serious outbreaks of disorder as in the past. We must endeavour to achieve the maximum co-ordination between the Shaikhdoms, especially in such matters as health, education, immigration and traffic rules and the like but so far as the major Shaikhdoms are concerned there is, in my opinion, no hope of establishing any kind of political federation. In the little Trucial Shaikhdoms, however, it is essential to introduce some form of joint administration if they are ever to become viable and a beginning has been made in this by the summoning of a Council of the Rulers from time to time for the discussion of matters of common interest. We should not go out of our way to encourage the establishment of a more popular form of Government in any of the Shaikhdoms, but should a demand for this arise anywhere we should do our best to keep the movement on proper lines and to guide it to a satisfactory conclusion.

17. The two main outstanding problems are the dispute with Saudi Arabia over their land boundaries with the Trucial Coast Shaikhdoms and Muscat, and the disposal of the large revenues of the oil-producing Shaikhdoms. In the former we are endeavouring to reach some settlement with the Saudis which will restore our good relations with them, without sacrificing the interests of our protégés, as this would have a disastrous effect on our whole position in the Gulf. I do not despair of reaching a satisfactory solution provided we maintain a firm front. The second problem involves matters of high finance on which I am not in a position to comment, but it is satisfactory to note that in spite of the fact that an Arab ordinarily never regards any revenue as surplus the Rulers concerned are building up reserves on the lines we desire. There are, I am afraid, many other problems unresolved, a number of them

relating to land and sea-bed boundaries, but I will not trouble you by enumerating them here.

18. I have purposely hitherto refrained from making more than a bare mention here and there of Muscat. Here we occupy in fact, but not in theory, the position of the protecting Power and enjoy few if any privileges in return beyond a vague promise given by the Sultan on his accession that he will be guided by our views in matters of importance. Even the extra-territorial jurisdiction which we previously exercised was whittled down to practically nothing when the latest commercial treaty came into force at the beginning of 1952. At the same time we agreed that the Political Agency at Muscat should in future always be referred to as Her Majesty's Consulate. The old Government of India treated Muscat as if it were an Indian State and it is this that makes the Sultan so jealous of his independent position. My predecessor regarded him as being more astute than Ibn Saud, and he has certainly shown great astuteness in persuading us to pull his chestnuts out of the fire for him. His regal aloofness in dealing with his tribesmen is also in my opinion assumed by him deliberately to cover his natural shyness and lack of forcefulness which characterises Ibn Saud. He bitterly regrets that he was educated in India and not given an Arab background. He has always been our firm friend, but an embarrassing and unsatisfactory one from our point of view. I have often been tempted to recommend that we should deal direct with some of the tribes over which he claims sovereignty but exercises no control, but have refrained from doing so because once we admit the independence of any of the Omani tribes we cannot deny the right of Ibn Saud to enter into direct relations with them, and because any entanglement in the interior of Oman would be a dangerous commitment. I am still convinced that this policy is the correct one in present circumstances. The future is most uncertain. It is universally prophesied that serious faction fighting will break out in

Oman on the death of the old and ailing Imam, and signs are not wanting that it will break out earlier. One faction, the Hinawi, will seek the support of the Sultan and the other, the Ghafiri, that of Ibn Saud. I consider that we must support the Sultan in such an emergency to the best of our ability, not only on account of our old friendship with him and because of his almost pathetic reliance on us, but because any failure to do so would arouse suspicion and mistrust of us in the hearts of the other Gulf Rulers. The Sultan is, however, so hesitant and slow to take positive action that I fear he may easily lose the opportunity of establishing his authority over the interior. In any case, once serious tribal fighting breaks out it is impossible to say where it will lead, and I cannot regard the future outlook with any confidence.

19. If I may end on a personal note, I should like to say how much I have enjoyed my time as Political Resident and how grateful I am to you, Sir, and to your predecessors in office for allowing me to retain the appointment for so long. In spite of climatic conditions it is one that has many attractions of which the fact that one is always beside or on the sea is not the least and it is worthy of note that since Sir Hugh Biscoe died in 1932 there have been only three substantive incumbents. Its functions are a cross between those of an ambassador and those of a Colonial Governor, and so far as I am aware there is no close parallel to it elsewhere. With eleven States and six oil companies to deal with there is always a crisis somewhere and there are few dull moments. I must admit, however, that after holding the post continuously for over seven years and having reached my sixtieth year I am now only too ready to transfer the burden of its responsibilities to younger shoulders.

20. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassadors at Jeddah and Bagdad and to the Head of the British Middle East Office.

I have, &c.

W. R. HAY.

CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE MINISTER OF STATE AND THE
SHAIKH OF BAHRAIN ON JUNE 16

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir R. Hay (Bahrain)

(No. 107. Confidential) *Foreign Office,*
Sir, *July 3, 1953.*

I transmit to your Excellency herewith a record of a meeting between the Ruler of Bahrain and the Minister of State on the 16th of June, 1953, at which was discussed the Ruler's claims to Zubara and to the seabed between Bahrain and Saudi Arabia.

I am, &c.

(For the Acting Secretary of State)

A. D. M. ROSS.

Enclosure in No. 7

The Shaikh of Bahrain called on the Minister of State on June 16. Sir Charles Belgrave, adviser to the Shaikh, and Mr. Burrows were also present.

2. The Minister of State told His Highness how much importance Her Majesty's Government attached to their relations with Bahrain, their oldest friend in the Persian Gulf, and asked if there were any matters in which His Highness required our help.

3. After expressions of the warm friendship felt for Her Majesty's Government by himself and his ancestors, the Shaikh said there were two important matters in which he hoped for Her Majesty's help.

4. The first was that of his rights at Zubara. Ever since the conquest of Bahrain by the Shaikh's ancestors they had had rights to certain property in Zubara and to send their flocks and shepherds and followers there. In 1936 the Shaikh of Qatar had tried to institute a system of passports and had used force against the Bahrainis who were carrying out their customary visits to Zubara. It had been necessary to remove these people to Bahrain and to make arrangements for them to graze their flocks in Saudi Arabia instead of in Qatar. In 1944 an agreement of a kind had been reached but there was continuous trouble. In 1950 a further agreement was made through the Political Agent by which the Bahrainis were allowed to return to Zubara and to take up their houses and belongings there provided they had a permit from the Shaikh of Bahrain. Their visits to Zubara were free of passport, Customs and police control. A few months ago some of the schoolboys from

the Bahrain schools went for a few days holiday camping at Zubara. They were approached by armed men from Qatar who asked how long they were staying and by whose permission. They said they were staying four days and by permission of the Shaikh of Bahrain. Shortly after this a Qatar police post was established near Zubara within the area in which the Shaikh of Bahrain claimed his rights. His people had, therefore, had to move from the vicinity of the post.

5. The Shaikh of Bahrain asked Her Majesty's Government to draw a line showing the boundaries of the area in which he had rights, and to ensure that the Shaikh of Qatar did not interfere inside that area with police and patrols. He said there was a map in Her Majesty's Government's possession which showed this area. He agreed in further discussion that he was not claiming sovereignty over this area, and that for instance, if oil were found in it, that would belong to the Shaikh of Qatar and not to him. But he wished to have a clear definition made by Her Majesty's Government and not by the Shaikh of Qatar of what the area was in which he could exercise his traditional rights.

6. The Minister of State said that Mr. Burrows would be instructed to make it one of his first tasks to study this matter after his arrival in the Persian Gulf and to send a full report to the Foreign Office. He would try to secure an agreement with the Shaikh of Qatar as to what the area was. If not, it would be necessary to consider whether some form of arbitration was desirable and if not what other steps could be taken to secure a decision. The Shaikh said that he would accept British arbitration in this matter.

7. The second question which the Shaikh wished to raise was that of the sea boundaries of Bahrain. Bahrain was a small island and its existence depended on the surrounding seas which it had always used for fisheries, pearling, &c. He was under the protection of Her Majesty's Government and they had defended him against the claims of the Persians and the Turks in the past. He now asked him to defend his territory against Saudi claims.

8. The Minister of State said that we wished to help the Shaikh in this matter in every way possible both because of our ancient friendship with Bahrain and also from our own interests, but it was essential that we should know that our case and the Shaikh's case was a good one and he hoped that all possible evidence would be

collected. This would then be examined by the lawyers and Mr. Burrows would also study the whole question as soon as he arrived. It would be necessary to seek a solution either by negotiation with Ibn Saud or by some special arbitration or by seeking a decision of the International Court.

POLICY OF HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT IN THE PERSIAN GULF

The Marquess of Salisbury to Mr. Burrows (Bahrain)

(No. 125. Secret) *Foreign Office,*
Sir, *July 24, 1953.*

In discharging your duties as Political Resident in the Persian Gulf your Excellency should be guided by the following general considerations:—

1. It is the policy of Her Majesty's Government to maintain the traditional position of Great Britain in the Gulf and to continue to fulfil the obligations which they have assumed in that area.

2. The Shaikhdoms of the Gulf have become of first importance to the United Kingdom and to the Sterling Area as a whole. It is essential that Her Majesty's Government should exert sufficient influence in them to ensure that there is no conflict between the policies of the rulers and those of Her Majesty's Government. This influence will in the main flow from a proper appreciation of the value of the British protection and advice by the rulers and their peoples.

3. Where appropriate, Her Majesty's Government will endeavour to advance the internal independence of the Shaikhdoms.

4. Her Majesty's Government will not oppose any political or economic association or co-ordination between the Shaikhdoms provided it is consistent with the aims under paragraphs 1 and 2 above. Except in the case of the Trucial States, where a common administration would appear to be highly desirable, such association and co-ordination will be encouraged only so far as it will assist the achievement of the said aims.

5. The intrusion of the direct influence of other Powers into British-protected States is unwelcome. In particular the extension of the activities of the Arab League countries must be resisted.

6. In view of the extent of United States investment and of need for United States assistance in the defence of the Gulf in war, it is essential to harmonise United States and British policy without, however, sacrificing the paramount British position. The closest personal relations must be maintained in the Gulf States between the British and United States official, service and business communities.

7. At the present stage of political development it is essential to foster closest relations between British officials and the members of the ruling families, and in this the lesser rulers of the Trucial Coast should not be neglected. Special efforts must also be made to keep in touch with opinion in all classes of society.

8. Present conditions demand full attention to economic and financial matters. The expenditure and investment of the rulers' incomes is a matter of direct interest to Her Majesty's Government.

9. The standard of administration and justice in the Shaikhdoms must be constantly improved. In particular an advance must be made in the Trucial States.

10. The maintenance of good relations with Saudi Arabia is highly desirable. To this end satisfactory solutions must be sought to outstanding disputes involving the frontiers and sea bed.

11. The oil companies must be free to develop their concessions. Their relations with the local States must be kept under close review at all times.

12. The facilities at present enjoyed by Her Majesty's forces in the Persian Gulf must be maintained.

13. The following paragraphs deal with the special problems of the individual territories under your supervision.

14. *The importance of Kuwait.*—During the last three years Kuwait has become of prime importance to the United Kingdom and to the sterling area as a whole. It is now a major source of oil supplies and an important element in our balance of payments. The expenditure of its large sterling revenue unless properly directed is capable of inflicting the most serious damage on the sterling area. Her Majesty's Government can no longer afford to confine themselves to the rôle authorised by the treaties and agreements in force and sanctioned by usage but must also interest themselves in all matters which affect the political and economic stability of Kuwait or which may affect the interests of the United Kingdom in the widest sense. This new conception of the rôle of Her Majesty's Government in regard to Kuwait entails a change in the nature of the advice to be tendered to the ruler and in the channels through which that advice is communicated.

15. *Nature of advice to be tendered to the Ruler.*—The subjects on which advice has traditionally been tendered to the ruler must now be expanded. In particular:—

- (i) It is of the highest importance that the policy of the ruler both in internal and external matters should at all times be in harmony with the interests of Her Majesty's Government.
- (ii) Discussions may be held with and, where appropriate, advice tendered to the ruler or his officials on all matters which may directly or indirectly involve the interests of Her Majesty's Government, in Kuwait or elsewhere.
- (iii) Matters covered by (ii) above include specifically—
 - (a) the creation in Kuwait of sound and effective administration;
 - (b) the terms of employment of British advisers and other British personnel;
 - (c) the introduction of a proper financial system;
 - (d) the development programme for Kuwait;
 - (e) questions affecting the position and interests of British and United States oil companies;
 - (f) the maintenance of good relations between British subjects in Kuwait and the local inhabitants;
 - (g) the security of Kuwait and the prevention of the entry of undesirable elements.

16. *Channels of communication.*—Normally all communication with the ruler will be through the Political Agent. To meet the changed circumstances the latter's standing will be enhanced by a higher grading for his post and by appropriate additions to his staff. He will have authority to speak in the name of Her Majesty's Government. On matters which traditionally fall within the responsibility of the Political Resident and on matters which are common to the States of the Persian Gulf as a whole, the Political Agent will receive instructions from you and will report to you, and copies of the correspondence will be forwarded to the Foreign Office where appropriate. On matters relating to the internal affairs of Kuwait, particularly to its administration, finance, development and security, however, the Political Agent will receive instructions from and report to me direct, copies of the correspondence being sent to you. There will, of course, be opportunities for consultation between the Political Agent and yourself and between the Foreign Office and yourself, and the political Agent will in addition keep you fully informed of developments in these fields. This does not detract from your responsibility for furthering our policies in Kuwait and in the Persian Gulf as a whole, and the Political Agent will thus remain under your general supervision. Moreover, you should whenever you deem it necessary be prepared to reinforce the representations made to the ruler by the Political Agent.

17. Your Excellency and the political agent will rely on patient, firm and tactful pressure to secure the ruler's acceptance of the advice of Her Majesty's Government.

18. *Bahrain.*—The objectives of Her Majesty's Government in Bahrain are—

- (i) to maintain the existing relationship between Her Majesty's Government and the ruler based on treaty and usage;
- (ii) to permit the continued orderly development of the administration;
- (iii) to retain the present facilities enjoyed by Her Majesty's Forces;
- (iv) to ensure stable conditions for the production of oil;
- (v) to develop enterprises which will assist in sustaining the prosperity in the event of a substantial decline in oil revenue;
- (vi) to create friendly relations between the ruler and his neighbours by the equitable solution of disputes involving territorial claims and the division of the sea bed.

19. *Qatar.*—The objectives of Her Majesty's Government in Qatar are—

- (i) to maintain the existing relationship between Her Majesty's Government and the Ruler of Qatar based on treaty and usage;
- (ii) to ensure stable conditions for the production of oil;
- (iii) to ensure that the revenues accruing to the State are disbursed, or invested, in a manner consonant with the interests of the United Kingdom;
- (iv) to build up the authority and influence of the British advisers and to create a sound administration in the State;
- (v) to determine finally the Qatar-Saudi-Abu Dhabi frontier;
- (vi) to create friendly relations between Qatar, the neighbouring British-Protected States and Saudi Arabia.

20. *Trucial States.*—The objectives of Her Majesty's Government in the British-Protected Trucial States are—

- (i) to maintain their position on the basis of existing treaties and usage;
- (ii) to determine as soon as possible the boundaries between the Trucial States and Saudi Arabia in such manner as to establish the justifiable claims of the rulers against Saudi encroachment, and to determine the boundaries of the Trucial States *inter se* and with Muscat;
- (iii) to foster good relations and mutual co-operation between the rulers with the ultimate object of achieving some measure of federation;
- (iv) to assist the oil companies in the exploitation of their concession on land and off shore;
- (v) to improve the administration of the States and in particular to bring about the expansion of the health services, the abolition of slavery and the development of natural resources.

21. To assist your Excellency in the above objectives you will have the services of the Trucial Oman Levies. The Foreign Office has overall responsibility for policy matters

(¹) Viz. A line defined as under—

The intersection of 52° E. and 23° N.
 The intersection of 54° 40' E. and 22° 40' N.
 The intersection of 55° 40' E. and 22° N.
 The intersection of 55° E. and 20° N.
 The intersection of 52° E. and 19° N.

(²) Not printed.

concerning the employment of this force. This responsibility is exercised through you acting with the advice of the Local Defence Committee, Persian Gulf, of which you are chairman. The operational and administrative control of the levies will be exercised directly by the Commander-in-chief's Committee, Middle East, through the Senior Army Officer, Persian Gulf, at Headquarters, Local Land Forces, Trucial States.

22. *Muscat.*—The objectives of Her Majesty's Government's policy in Muscat are—

- (i) to retain as far as possible the relationship based on existing agreements between the United Kingdom and the Sultan of Muscat and to harmonise the Sultan's internal and external policies with the interests of Her Majesty's Government;
- (ii) to retain the facilities in the Sultanate at present granted to Her Majesty's forces;
- (iii) to secure recognition of the frontier between Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate as near as possible to the line defined by the Sultan in 1937;⁽¹⁾
- (iv) to enable Petroleum Development (Oman) (Limited) to take full advantage (at the earliest moment) of their concession, which, in Her Majesty's Government's view, covers the Sultan's territory up to the line defined at (iii) above;

In pursuing the objective at (iv), Her Majesty's Government hope that the Sultan of Muscat will be able to extend his authority peacefully and effectively over the tribes of the Central Oman and that Saudi influence will be excluded from that area. Her Majesty's Government are ready to assist the Sultan in this task but wish, if possible, to avoid direct involvement.

23. I am sending the text of paragraphs 14-17 to the political agent at Kuwait, and I enclose herein, for your Excellency's information, a copy⁽²⁾ of my instructions to him.

I am, &c.

SALISBURY.

**CONCESSION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE RULER OF DUBAI AND
PETROLEUM DEVELOPMENT (TRUCIAL COAST) LIMITED**

Mr. Wall to Lord Salisbury. (Received March 7)

(No. 72. Confidential) *Bahrain,*
My Lord Marquess, *July 27, 1953.*

I have the honour to refer to Mr. Eden's despatch No. 185 (EA 15316/20) of the 27th of October, 1952, and to enclose herewith three certified copies of a letter from the Ruler of Dubai, giving the required assurances. In accordance with Mr. Eden's instructions I am now informing both the Ruler and Mr. Heseldin that Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom approve the concession agreement between them.

I have, &c.
J. W. WALL.

*Translation of letter dated the 21st Shawal
1372 (2nd July, 1953) from the Ruler of
Dubai to the Political Agent, Trucial
States, Sharjah.*

After compliments,

I have the honour to confirm in connection with my sea-bed oil agreement with Mr. George Heseldin of Petroleum Development (Trucial Coast) Limited signed on 7th August, 1952 that I understand and agree to the following:—

- (1) That in the event of any terms of this agreement conflicting or being inconsistent with any terms of the Political

Agreement concluded between the Political Resident acting on behalf of Her Majesty's Government and Mr. George Heseldin which was signed on 1st December, 1952, the latter agreement will prevail.

- (2) That if it should prove necessary under the terms of Clause (7) of Article 15 of the Political Agreement, to request me to terminate my Agreement with Mr. Heseldin I will accept the advice of Her Majesty's Government in this respect.

Usual Ending.

*Political Agency,
Trucial States,
Sharjah,
19th July, 1953.*

To Shaikh Rashid bin Said, Dubai.

After compliments,

I thank you, O'Shaikh, for your letter dated the 21st Shawal 1372 and hereby inform you that your Concession Agreement with Petroleum Concessions Limited now has the formal approval of Her Majesty's Government.

Usual Ending.

C. M. PIRIE-GORDON,
Political Agent.

**CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE POLITICAL RESIDENT IN THE
PERSIAN GULF AND THE RULER OF KUWAIT**

**Her Majesty's Government's Proposal for the Appointment of a Senior
Administrator**

Mr. Burrows to Lord Salisbury. (Received August 29)

(No. 78. Confidential) *Bahrain,*
My Lord Marquess, *August 20, 1953.*

With reference to Kuwait telegram No. 232 of August 16 I have the honour to report that I arrived in Kuwait on Sunday

the 9th of August, and that after exchanging courtesy calls with the Ruler and members of his family and hearing the views of British officials in the State Government, representatives of British contractors, the

manager of the British Bank of the Middle East, the general manager of the Kuwait Oil Company and many others, and after briefly seeing for myself the progress of development work in the town, I had a conversation with His Highness Shaikh Abdullah bin Salim on the 13th August and communicated to him the Prime Minister's message. Mr. Pelly was present. After an Arabic translation of the message had been read to His Highness I said that Her Majesty's Government were deeply conscious of the friendship which existed between them and Kuwait and they recognised that His Highness had given practical proofs that he was equally conscious of this friendship by, for instance, his agreement to receive sterling from the Kuwait Oil Company, his decision to invest his surplus funds in the United Kingdom and by his appointment of British officials. His Highness added to this list his decision to buy British machinery for the water distillation plant and to refuse the offer of the Westinghouse Company to supply it as evidence of his desire to meet our wishes to restrict to the utmost the expenditure of dollars.

2. I continued that the long-standing friendship between our two countries had prompted the Prime Minister to make this further suggestion as regards the appointment of a senior official to take charge of the administration. What I had seen and heard in Kuwait had convinced me of the necessity of this measure for three main reasons:—

- (i) Co-ordination of the various departments in order to avoid confusion and inefficiency. I gave as an example the lack of authority over the port where congestion was causing serious delays. This cost the State a great deal of money and postponed the completion of development works.
- (ii) A senior administrator would be able to listen to the arguments of the technicians, who by their nature habitually disagreed with each other, and to present a single view to His Highness, thus sparing him the necessity of having to listen himself to technical arguments and come to decisions about individual cases. The administrator would consult His Highness on broad questions of policy and would then execute the policy without continually having to take His Highness' time.

(iii) I attached particular importance to the necessity for introducing proper financial control by means of a budgetary system. A budgetary system meant two things. First, there should be a decision how to allocate funds at the disposal of the State between investment expenditure on development, current expenditure of the Government and private expenditure (*i.e.*, that of the Ruling Family). Secondly, it meant that once totals of expenditure had been allotted to various departments their expenditure should be strictly controlled so that it did not exceed these totals. I was glad to note that it appeared to be the intention that expenditure on development should run at a lower rate in future than during the past year, but it would be useless to adopt this policy if there was no check on the actual expenditure of departments. Moreover, it was particularly important that there should be a clear separation between the expenditure of State funds by departments and expenditure for private purposes.

3. His Highness said at this point that he was grateful to The Queen, the Prime Minister, Her Majesty's Government and to myself for the interest which was being shown in the affairs of Kuwait and for the opinions which had been expressed. He had already expressed his view when these subjects were raised with him in London. He would do his best with regard to these matters, following his own conscience; if he failed there would then be time to see what was required. He fully understood what I was getting at in my remarks about expenditure, but we must remember that wealth had come very suddenly to Kuwait and that they had come new to these problems. He quoted a saying of the prophet Mohammed to his wife to the effect that her people had only lately become believers and must be treated accordingly. We should realise there were customs and traditions amongst the Arabs following which both the Ruler's family and the people of Kuwait felt that it was their right to share in this wealth which had come to them. It was impossible to overlook these traditions.

4. I said in reply that I had used the privilege of the long friendship between our countries to speak very frankly; while we

fully realised and respected the customs of the Arabs I had felt bound to refer to the separation of public and private expenditure because of the example before our eyes of what happened in Saudi Arabia when this principle was neglected and in spite of great wealth the country had run into serious financial difficulties. We had no doubt of the good intentions of His Highness and of his care for the interest of the people, but what appeared to me to be lacking was the means of executing his wishes, and this is what we thought we could help to supply as a result of our administrative and financial experience.

5. I then said that as a result of the great interest now being taken by Her Majesty's Government in everything that concerned Kuwait they had arranged that Mr. Pelly should correspond directly with them on all these matters and that it should be understood that when he spoke to the Ruler he would be speaking with the voice of Her Majesty's Government. I could, unfortunately, not spend all my time in Kuwait. I would come there whenever it was necessary or whenever His Highness wished, but meanwhile he could regard Mr. Pelly as speaking with full authority. After some initial difficulty in understanding this arrangement His Highness said that he understood that Mr. Pelly's sphere of action had been extended and that he appreciated this.

6. His Highness finally said that he would give a formal reply. This has now been received, in the form of a letter to me, of which I enclose a translation. It is, if anything, more cautious than His Highness' verbal reply in the conversation. There may, however, perhaps be some virtue in His Highness' wish that the Prime Minister should be informed of the tenor of our conversation, and of the "assurances" exchanged.

7. I fear that we must accept the fact that the Ruler does not feel able, at present at any rate, to accept our suggestion that he should appoint a senior official to co-ordinate his administration and to introduce budgetary control. Even if we had any effective sanction, which we do not, it would be unwise at present to attempt to apply any more extreme form of pressure. In my conversation with the Ruler I went to the limit of frankness permitted by a comparatively short acquaintance in alluding openly to the difficulty of controlling the expenditure of members of his family. He took

what I had to say in good part, and at subsequent social meetings he has been cheerful and friendly, but Mr. Pelly has called my particular attention to the danger that if he is pressed too far the Ruler may react either by returning to the idea of abdication, which I believe would be contrary to our interests, or by withholding his present very valuable financial co-operation or by surrounding himself with Arab advisers to protect him from our intervention. The appointment of Jabri was probably due, at least in part, to the vigour with which Hasted pressed his schemes on Fahad and the Ruler.

8. I think the Ruler probably sees much of what is wrong in Kuwait and that he will make some hesitating and half-hearted efforts to improve it. If the situation showed signs of getting entirely out of hand he might call on us for help, though probably leaving it until very late. What we have to do in this situation is to use every possible method of strengthening his will to act forcibly, and to have our own yardstick by which to determine for ourselves at what moment, if any, it is necessary to intervene more drastically. Much will depend, for instance, on the success or failure of Colonel Crichton's efforts to install an effective budget system. We can help by pressing the Ruler on all appropriate occasions to give more power to Colonel Crichton, but this must be carefully done as the Ruler has in the past expressed his keen displeasure at "ganging-up" between his advisers and Her Majesty's representatives.

9. But our main means of influence, failing the appointment of a senior adviser, will be the execution by the Political Agent at Kuwait of the functions laid down in your despatch to him No. EA 1055/13 of July 25, in which he is instructed to intervene more than hitherto in internal affairs and financial and development questions. Apart from matters of organisation, administration and budgetary control, it may be desirable for the Political Agent to give the views of Her Majesty's Government on the development programme as a whole, the allocation of finance as between it, investment and current expenditure, on the priorities to be accorded to particular items and on the methods of executing the programme. I do not think that advice on these lines will necessarily be unwelcome to the Ruler, though it can by no means be guaranteed that he will act on it. In order that the Political Agent may be in a position to offer such advice he will have to receive comments from the competent departments of Her Majesty's Government on the development programme and all matters relating to it.

The present organisational confusion between the Public Works Department and the Development Department prevents any comprehensive picture of the future being obtained. But Mr. Pelly will send to the Foreign Office monthly progress reports on the financial, administrative and development situation, with particular reference to the work and the prospects of work of British contractors. I have asked Colonel Crichton to keep the agency continually informed of developments in the financial situation and particularly of any progress towards the establishment of a budgetary system. This should enable us to see whether the Ruler has in fact been making any serious attempt to carry out his undertaking to try to improve matters in his own way.

10. In order that the Political Agent may effectively carry out the policy described above it is necessary that his staff should be increased and that improved housing and transport should be provided for them. The appointment of a Financial and Economic Counsellor on my staff who will reside for at least six months in Kuwait will be of the greatest value in this connexion, but there is urgent need of other measures which I am submitting separately. Expenditure on these, possibly on a considerable scale so far as housing is concerned, can, I am sure, be justified in relation to the financial and political stakes involved in the reaffirmation of our position in Kuwait.

11. So far as British trade is concerned our chief efforts should be directed towards ensuring that the British contractors now working here are allowed to finish their existing work, and that those whose work will end before the expiry of their three years' contract should be given a reasonable amount of work until up to the end of the three years. Secondly, we must ensure that if, as seems inevitable, most major new work is put out to tender, the conditions should be such as to give a fair chance and if possible a preferential chance to British firms. I regret that it seems impossible to persuade the Ruler to agree that the existing British firms should be allowed to tender for other work while their contracts continue. There is too much past history, local agitation and personal animosity bound up in this question to give us hope of reversing this decision. We have made both to the Ruler and to Shaikh Fahad the point about additional work being given to fulfil the terms of the existing contracts. We have secured a written undertaking of preference for British

firms in connexion with the port contract and we can try to do the same with other contracts. Nevertheless the greatest factor in the further success of British trade here will be the determination of British firms to secure contracts. Foreign competition will certainly be keen and probably unscrupulous. I trust that Her Majesty's Government will use all their influence with the British firms concerned to ensure that they make a really serious effort to retain the lion's share of this market in the new conditions. In addition to the development works which may be expected to run at a rate of several millions a year for years to come, there is a large and increasing market for consumer goods which I fear some of our firms may tend to overlook. This market will be increasingly discriminating and the success in it which we ought to have will need high qualities of salesmanship and adaptability to peculiar local conditions.

12. I regret that it has not been possible so far to obtain more positive results. I hardly expected to do so on my first visit. I do not feel the situation is as bad as it has been represented in some quarters in London. Grave dangers undoubtedly remain and they have been brought clearly before the mind of the Ruler. It remains to be seen whether his good intentions, supported where appropriate by us, will overcome his natural weakness in the face of difficulty and in particular his reluctance to deal firmly with his family. Our task will be, first, to show at every possible opportunity that we intend to retain and fortify our interest not only in matters of commercial concern to ourselves but also as regards the future of this territory in all its aspects. Secondly, we must increase our powers of observation and record so that we can detect without delay in which direction the situation is moving. That is to say, we must be able to determine with accuracy whether the Ruler is improving matters by his own methods or whether the dangers we have foreseen are approaching so rapidly that more drastic intervention by us is required.

13. I have put down in my immediately following despatch some impressions and general comments on Kuwait.

14. I have shown this despatch to Mr. Pelly, who is in general agreement with it.

15. I am sending copies of this despatch to the Political Agent, Kuwait, and to the British Middle East Office, Fayid.

I have, &c.

B. A. B. BURROWS.

Enclosure

Translation of letter from His Highness the Ruler of Kuwait, to his Excellency the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf

After compliments,

We have perused the translation of the text of the message from his Excellency the Prime Minister of Great Britain, which you delivered to us this morning, and which contained his Excellency's valuable advice and precious views. These (we know) were dictated by the spirit of affection and friendship and merit every consideration and appreciation by us.

We shall be very grateful if you would kindly bring before his Excellency the gist

of the discussion and of the assurances which were exchanged between you and ourselves in the presence of the Political Agent. We are quite certain that when his Excellency understands our intentions and our aim at sound targets for the welfare of our people and our country, he will feel confident that we are not neglectful in the pursuit of these targets.

Asking you to assure his Excellency of my thanks for the interest which he has shown.

ABDULLA EL SALIM AL SUBAH,
Ruler of Kuwait.

*Dated 2nd Dhil Hejja 1372
(13.8.53)*

EA 1103/144

No. 11

**HER MAJESTY'S POLITICAL RESIDENT'S FIRST IMPRESSIONS AND
GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE SITUATION IN KUWAIT**

Mr. Burrows to Lord Salisbury. (Received August 29)

(No. 79. Confidential) *Bahrain,*
My Lord Marquess, *August 20, 1953.*

I have reported in my immediately preceding despatch my conversation with the Ruler of Kuwait about the appointment of a senior administrator. I am setting out in the present despatch some of my first impressions and general comments on the situation here, which may provide a useful background against which our policy should be considered. I would normally have wished to wait a longer time before attempting to describe the situation or comment upon it, but realising the interest and urgency with which affairs in Kuwait are now being followed in London I thought that even provisional comments might be of use at this stage.

2. Kuwait is a patriarchal Arab society consisting of the Ruling Family, a fairly small number of important and wealthy merchants, a larger number of minor merchants and shop-keepers, and finally the mass of unskilled labour which has hitherto lived at a very low standard. In a short space of time there has been imposed on this society an almost unimaginable increase of wealth, an influx of foreigners, ranging from directors of contracting companies and senior British

officials to the unemployed tribesmen of Iraq and Oman is search of work and food, and finally the greatly increased impact of Arab nationalist ideas. These new elements have served to increase the power of the Shaikhs of the Ruling Family because they have access to the newly-acquired wealth. They have at the same time become less amenable to our influence and more familiar with the anti-colonial parrot-cries of the Arab League. The rich merchants have become much richer and those less rich have become more envious. The poor have to compete with imported foreign labour, though official policy favours the local against the immigrant, and they are already securing some benefits from the early stages of the welfare State which is the agreed aim of Kuwait's development. The power of the Ruling Family is one of the factors perhaps not sufficiently appreciated outside Kuwait. Each department of the Government is headed by a member of the family. Practically no attempt has hitherto been made to restrict their expenditure, either departmental or personal, of the oil revenues. Moreover, in all matters they are above the law, and are accustomed to impose their personal authority by force if necessary. The Ruler

has theoretical authority over them all but has not yet up to now cared to exercise it. There is grumbling about this state of affairs among some of the merchants and others, but this hardly seems likely in present circumstances to lead to any significant action. The fate of the constitutional experiments in Kuwait in the thirties suggests that it would be extremely unwise for us to be associated with any move of this kind. A benevolent autocracy is likely to be the best government that Kuwait can have for a considerable time. The trouble with the present régime is that while the Ruler is benevolent but not sufficiently autocratic the rest of his family are individually autocratic but rarely benevolent.

3. I received the impression in London that it was generally thought both in Government departments and in business circles who were interested in Kuwait that almost everything about the situation here was wrong and dangerous. In trying to disentangle the causes for this feeling it appeared that they were composed of the following elements:—

- (i) the administration and the execution of development work was chaotic and changes in the administration were likely to prove fatal to the prospects of British trade;
- (ii) Kuwait was in danger of becoming another Abadan because it was slipping out of our control, because anti-British elements were taking charge and because Her Majesty's Government were not taking sufficiently forceful action;
- (iii) lack of financial control made it likely that there would be waste on a colossal scale, while failure properly to plan development would also lead to an excessive rate of expenditure and therefore to inflation. Kuwait was thus likely to follow the fate of Saudi Arabia and fall into financial chaos;
- (iv) the misuse of Kuwait's wealth and particularly the grant of large contracts outside the sterling area could have a far reaching effect on the situation of the sterling area as a whole.

4. It is not my purpose to defend everything that has been done in Kuwait either by the Kuwaitis or by ourselves. Much has been done wrong and we have hitherto more or less followed the policy of non-interference in internal affairs, inherited

from the Government of India, and have missed opportunities for advice and pressure which might in the earlier stages have influenced events. Nevertheless, I believe the extent of what has gone right has been obscured by ill-informed and interested clamour. I have myself been surprised on first looking at the situation here to find that it is not as bad as I had been led in London to believe, both financially, administratively and in the progress of actual development work. As the Ruler is fond of reminding us, we have attained certain extremely important objectives here, such as the retention of Kuwait in the sterling area through the Ruler's acceptance of sterling for his oil, the agreement to set up an Investment Board and invest surplus funds in the United Kingdom, and the very reasonable way in which on the whole the Ruler has handled requests for dollars for essential supplies. I submit that the advantages already obtained from these decisions both as regards sterling area finances and British trade are very considerable. Representatives of the British contractors here admit readily that they have done very well. Here is something which might have easily been very much worse. Secondly, the Ruler has on the whole shown that he is conscious of Her Majesty's Government's responsibility for his external affairs, as for example by his request to us, reported in Kuwait telegram No. 221, to obtain the agreement of the Iraq Government with regard to the supply of water from the Shatt al Arab. Thirdly, the Ruler has appointed a number of British officials. He has unfortunately failed to give them adequate powers and their position has been further prejudiced by his failure to support them when necessary, but it must be admitted that it has also been considerably prejudiced by the much publicised disagreements between them. Nevertheless there are now about seventy of them (including technicians) in the Kuwait administration, where a few years ago there were none. Even Jabri, the Syrian engineer in the Public Works Department, who has been called the spearhead of anti-British influence, is now seeking to engage a number of British engineers on his own staff.

5. So far as the administration is concerned, the Public Security Department acts in ordinary police matters with vigour and not without some hit-or-miss efficiency (but please see also paragraph 10 below), and the embryo frontier force which is growing out of it is trained and controlled by a

British officer on loan to Kuwait. The organisation of public health has made large strides under a team of British doctors and nurses, in particular the health and hygiene of the school-children has been vastly improved. The success of Dr. Parry in the hospital and in the general administration of public health shows what can be done by a British official with the right temperament and technical qualifications. Education has from very small beginnings reached a standard that is quite fair in comparison with other Middle East countries, though as noted below its future development has disquieting possibilities, and in such a rapid expansion it has been necessary to import many teachers from neighbouring countries whose presence may ultimately not be in our interest. Finally, leaving aside for the time being the question of development policy and design, it is remarkable with what speed the works approved have been carried out. They are at present at varying degrees removed from completion, and at the same time almost all the roads in and around the town are being rebuilt. In spite of administrative confusion, work is continuing on all these projects without interruption. From now on the appearance of chaos which has so struck the imagination of journalists and others who have made a rapid excursion to Kuwait may be expected to decrease as existing projects are completed and if, as seems likely, the rate of further building is decreased. The remarkable practical progress made in these works is due to the energy and persistence of General Hasted, the Controller of Development, and to the senior representatives of the British contracting companies. If a comparison were made between what has happened in Kuwait and development schemes in other parts of the world, and even with some of those which have been attempted in recent years under British control, I believe that the comparison as regards wastage and confusion would not be unfavourable to Kuwait.

6. In addition to the above factors relating to the most recent events in Kuwait it is essential to remember that during all this time the Kuwait Oil Company has been able to pursue its own development almost entirely without friction and hindrance from the local authorities and without any serious difficulty with the local government and people. In fact, its relations with the State have never been better. The negotiation of a new agreement was necessary to bring the payment arrangements in line with the rest of the Middle East and this will no doubt

occur again if any change in the present system is accepted by the Arabian-American Oil Company or any other Middle East company, but up till now, at any rate, the experience of the Kuwait Oil Company is a factor on the credit side of the balance.

7. Turning to the debit side it is remarkable how much may be laid at the door of the Ruling Family and their inter-relations. The Ruler himself has good intentions, and an appreciation of his duty to his people in the new and difficult situation in which he finds himself, but he notably lacks either the will or the power to carry through against opposition what he sees to be right. He is personally economical and provident, and there is no doubt that he realises clearly that other members of his family do not share these qualities. His health is not good; only one of his kidneys functions, and he suffers occasionally from the gout. He is probably also genuinely convinced, as he has said to Mr. Pelly, that it is not only in his interest but also in ours that he should proceed slowly and carefully with the acceptance of British advice so as not to weaken his position both in Kuwait and in the rest of the Arab world. The unity of the family and its claim to share in all available benefits, to which he referred in the conversation reported in my despatch under reference, is one of the fundamental facts of Arab, or at any rate of bedouin, society and Arab history has shown that often it can only be disregarded at the cost of extreme personal tyranny and bloodshed.

8. There is little doubt that the chief danger to the future of Kuwait is at present the lack of a budgetary system and proper financial control. It would be the main task of a senior adviser or administrator to impose this system. The absence of such a system is due primarily to the failure by the Ruler to control the members of his family who are at the heads of different departments and particularly his half-brother, Shaikh Fahad, who is in charge of the Departments of Health and Public Works and of the Municipality. In addition to departmental extravagance it is evident that departmental funds are being used by the Shaikhs for their private purposes. There should be introduced fairly soon a clear distinction between allotments of finance to departments and the Civil List allotments to individual members of the Ruling Family, and both types of expenditure should be restricted to the amounts allotted under the respective budget heads. To bring this about it would be necessary either for the

Ruler to give full powers to an administrator or himself to see that control was exercised by giving the appropriate decision when particular cases of over-spending are submitted to him.

9. A second major defect is the continuing disorganisation and uncertainty in the Public Works and Development administrations, and the lack of co-ordination between them and the Finance Department. An incidental advantage of this is that the rate of spending on new development projects has been severely restricted owing to the inability of all concerned to agree on a programme and on the means of carrying it out. Like most of the development difficulties, this confusion has been due primarily to excessive haste on the part not only of the Kuwaitis but also of some of the British officials and firms involved. It has also been continuously bedevilled by a conflict of personalities in which General Hasted, Colonel Crichton, the Financial Adviser, Shaikh Fahad, the Ruler's half-brother, and Majdudin Jabri, the recently appointed Syrian Director of Public Works, have all been in varying degrees at fault. It was unfortunate that there should have been serious disagreement between the two senior British officers. It was even more unfortunate and reprehensible that the existence of these disagreements became public knowledge in Kuwait. This seriously weakened the influence which ought to have been exerted on the development programme through British advice. I have spoken in this sense to both General Hasted and Colonel Crichton. The other main fault in this sphere, again partly due to haste, has been that the programme of works approved and started is extremely unbalanced, with far too much emphasis on school buildings. The Education Department is of course controlled by another member of the Ruling Family. Moreover, the British architects who designed the school buildings, perhaps not unnaturally took advantage of the Kuwaitis' wish to have a series of buildings which would outdo anything else in the Middle East and have produced designs which to the lay observer seem over-elaborate and expensive. The Kuwaitis are unfortunately likely to be more impressed by the expense than by the real excellence of the work which is being done. Finally, it is at least questionable whether it was in the long-term interests of British trade to allot the initial contracts for development work in Kuwait to a closed list of British contractors on a cost plus

15 per cent. basis. There are various quite sound arguments in favour of this decision and the business has been a very profitable one to the British firms concerned, whatever complaints they may now be making, but it cannot be denied that its long-term effects may be to our disadvantage. The long-term social effects of this immense education programme are even more questionable. The results of higher education elsewhere in the Middle East, where it creates little besides a class of white-collar unemployed and a striking force for subversive politicians, must fill one with forebodings. It is most unfortunate that the absence of British Council representation in the Persian Gulf removed from us our best hope of influencing the education policy of Kuwait in its formative stages. A British Council office here is all the more needed now to help mitigate its effects.

10. What stands out from these considerations of the development programme is that there should have taken place in good time, *i.e.*, between eighteen months and a year ago, a careful consideration by Her Majesty's Government of the political, social, financial and commercial implications of the expenditure of a large part of Kuwait's new wealth on development, with the object of offering advice and, if necessary, pressure on the Kuwaitis in the formation of their policy. None of this happened. It is probably fruitless to allocate the blame now. It must be attributed partly to the British officials in the Kuwait Government who rushed ahead without consideration of the major issues involved and without presenting the development programme adequately to the local representatives of Her Majesty's Government. Secondly, our own staffs, both in Kuwait and Bahrain, fulfilling their traditional task of looking after primarily the external affairs of the Gulf States, believed, not unnaturally, but perhaps for too long, that they could leave development questions to the senior British advisers who had been appointed to the Kuwait Government for this purpose. The implications of development expenditure were thus not brought soon enough to the notice of Her Majesty's Government (and on this point the methods of reporting and the unfamiliarity of those concerned with Whitehall procedure may have partly been to blame). Finally, there was, I think, until too recently a comparatively low priority given in London to the consideration of Persian Gulf problems, in spite of Sir Roger

Makins' visit and report on Persian Gulf problems early in 1952.

11. Another danger is the large number of foreign clerical and unskilled workers arriving in this country from all the neighbouring areas. The worst of these are probably the Palestinians, Persians and Iraqis. The local security organisation run by Shaikh Abdullah Mubarak, cousin of the present Ruler and a possible candidate for the succession, has, as I have said, a certain primitive efficacy, but it would be entirely unfitting to cope with a modern subversive organisation such as might well exist or be introduced among the Persians or Iraqi workmen. Moreover, there is confusion and competition between the internal security force of Shaikh Abdullah Mubarak and the town police organised separately by Shaikh Subah as-Salim, brother of Shaikh Fahad. I consider the provision of advice by us on anti-subversive security matters, preferably by the appointment of a British adviser to Shaikh Abdullah Mubarak, to be second only in priority to the installation of a proper financial system. Unfortunately, Shaikh Abdullah Mubarak has been absent from Kuwait during my visit. He has in the past resisted the idea of such an appointment. I am writing separately about possible further methods of approaching this objective.

12. The judicial system both on our side and on that of the Kuwaitis is inadequate to the development of an industrial welfare State and it is remarkable that we have not had trouble hitherto on this score. The first necessity is to produce our own revised legislation which we must then try to have adopted to the greatest possible extent by the Kuwaitis. This will be a most difficult though necessary task. It would, however,

not be desirable to try to secure any immediate results, as pressure from us on this subject would merely distract attention and increase the disinclination of the Kuwaitis to consider our other and more urgent objectives.

13. Finally, attention should be called to the baffling difficulty presented to us by the primitive nature of the Kuwait Government machine. There is a so-called Government Secretariat of which the head is Abdullah Mullah, an amiable but hardly disinterested Kuwaiti who inherited the position from his father and supplements his meagre official income by participating on a vast scale in almost every business venture floated in Kuwait. Naturally he divides his time between State and private business in proportion to the rewards which each brings him, and equally naturally he dislikes putting to the Ruler a disagreeable or difficult point of view. He has now appointed a British official to his office and this somewhat facilitates the transaction of routine business. But the fact remains that there is literally no one with whom we can prepare the ground or back up our representations to the Ruler. The Ruler has been absent from Kuwait for much of this year, and when he is there is often averse to business discussion. Moreover he finds difficulty in grasping a point of argument of any length or complexity. But there is no other channel on which one can rely, except personal discussion with him. This will be an even more serious handicap as we increase the number and difficulty of the matters we have to put to him.

14. I am sending copies of this despatch to Kuwait and the British Middle East Office, Fayid.

I have, &c.

B. A. B. BURROWS.

EA 1103/145

No. 12

HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT'S INTEREST IN INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS IN KUWAIT

Mr. Burrows to Lord Salisbury. (Received August 29)

(1)

(No. 80. Confidential) Bahrain,
My Lord Marquess, August 21, 1953.
With reference to my despatches Nos. 78 and 79 of August 20 about my visit to

Kuwait, I have the honour to report that the Ruler paid a farewell call on me at the Agency on August 18. I took the opportunity to say that I was disappointed that

it had been impossible during my visit to reach agreement on the proposal in the Prime Minister's message that a senior administrator should be appointed. I thought there was agreement between us and His Highness that certain things needed improving, but not on the method of doing so. His Highness had said that he would try to bring about improvements by his own methods. I hoped that he would be successful. Both he and we would have to watch what happened and see whether progress was in fact being made. I hoped to return to Kuwait in a few weeks, and at any rate before His Highness's proposed journey to India in November, and there would then be an opportunity for further discussion as to the progress made. I understood that it was His Highness's intention that if he failed in his own efforts he would come to us for such help as we could give.

2. The Ruler did not demur to any of this. In my conversations with him he has taken advantage of the notorious ambiguity and imprecision of the Arabic language to leave vague exactly what he would do if he failed to improve matters by his own methods. I thought it well, therefore, to indicate that we should be watching to see whether these methods were successful and to suggest a date-line by which it should be possible to decide whether or not other means would have to be considered. In order to leave no doubt of our interest in internal developments in Kuwait I also felt it advisable to send the Ruler a reply to his letter enclosed in my despatch No. 78, in which I set down the administrative questions which seemed most in need of his attention. A copy of this letter is enclosed. I trust that if His Highness were to take up the suggestion of expert advice on port organisation it would not be too difficult to arrange at short notice for the visit of a British expert. The present delay in unloading ships is disgraceful and its repercussions are felt throughout the Gulf.

3. At the end of the conversation His Highness mentioned that he too had claims, which he did not wish to discuss at that time, but which he did not wish us to overlook. He was doubtless referring to his date gardens in Iraq and the definition of his boundaries, particularly those in the sea bed, which he had raised in London. As he was not pressing the point and as there was nothing hopeful I could say, I did not speak on the lines of Bagdad telegram No. 464 of August 7, but replied that we were fully conscious that our friendship rested

on mutual benefit. In spite of His Highness's restraint in reverting to these matters I am convinced that any concrete evidence we can give of our will and ability to help him over them will be of real value in helping us to achieve our objectives in Kuwait. I hope that our attitude towards them may be considered in this light and not simply with regard to the intrinsic importance of the individual questions at issue.

4. I am sending copies of this despatch to the Political agent at Kuwait and to the British Middle East Office at Fayid and Beirut.

I have, &c.

B. A. B. BURROWS.

Enclosure

Mr. Burrows to H.H. The Ruler of Kuwait

Kuwait,

August 18, 1953.

I am grateful for Your Highness's letter and I will convey to Sir Winston Churchill the sense of our conversation.

Your Highness invited me on coming to Kuwait to see everything and hear everything and form my own judgment. I have done this. I have seen many things that are good and many proofs of the care of Your Highness for the good of the people. There are in my opinion some other matters which still require Your Highness's attention and decision. I am sure Your Highness is aware of these matters, but I have thought it useful to note them down in the hope that the opinion of a new and friendly observer may be of some help in the great task which lies before Your Highness.

The matters to which I refer are:—

1. The introduction of a budget and financial control.
2. Co-ordination of the administration of development and public works and finance. The development board is too much involved in detailed argument. It should settle the broad programme for the future and leave the execution of it to the experts.
3. Appointment of a single authority over the port.
(Perhaps a short visit could be made by a British expert e.g., from the Port of London Authority to examine the situation and submit to Your Highness a technical report.)

4. Technical advice to the public security authorities on the control of subversive organisations which may be introduced among foreign workers.
5. Public health control of immigrants to avoid the danger of serious epidemics in Kuwait.

I need not assure Your Highness that these proposals are made not from any selfish interest, but in order to promote the advancement and good name of Kuwait.

EA 1103/163

(2)

**TRANSLATION OF LETTER DATED SEPTEMBER 2, 1953 FROM
HIS HIGHNESS, THE RULER OF KUWAIT, TO HIS EXCELLENCY
THE POLITICAL RESIDENT IN THE PERSIAN GULF**

We have received your letter No. 125 dated 18th August, 1953 and have understood what was mentioned therein, with many thanks for your valuable advice and apposite views regarding the suggestions to which you referred.

The fact is that we are endeavouring very much to settle these matters in due course,

and will seek the views of technical experts when necessary. In the meantime we wish to express our appreciation of those remarks, and it will be a great pleasure to receive with gratitude, from time to time, what remarks and views you may consider to be for common benefit. We pray God to lead us and grant us success.

EA 1017/12

No. 13

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS OF DHOFAR

Mr. Burrows to Lord Salisbury. (Received September 12)

(No. 87. Confidential) *Bahrain,*
My Lord Marquess, *September 8, 1953.*

I have recorded in separate communications the more important points which arose in my conversations with the Sultan of Muscat at Salalah on August 29 to 31. I am submitting in the present despatch some more general impressions of Dhofar and of the Sultan's attitude which I hope may provide a useful background.

2. It is one of the many paradoxes of Arabia that by going several hundred miles south from this hot-house climate one can discover in the province of Dhofar, within the tropics, a climate which even in the height of summer suggests a cloudy autumn day on the shores of the Mediterranean. Dhofar consists of a semi-circular plain bounded by the sea and by an amphitheatre of hills rising from 1,000 feet to 5,000 or 6,000 at some points. The climate is determined by the reaction between this range of hills and the south-west monsoon

which just extends to this latitude. The result is fairly plentiful rain during the summer, an abundant crop of grass on the hills, and temporarily on the plain, and a reserve of water which keeps alive considerable areas of forest on the higher ground and can be tapped for irrigation in the plain. At one point in the hills there is even a fresh water lake several miles long which discharges into the plain by a small but spectacular waterfall. The extent of this fertile area of hills and plain is perhaps 100 to 200 square miles. It is bounded on each side by an infertile tract of mountainous country, and on the north by the arid gravel plain which leads into the great sands of the Rub al Khali. The inhabitants are said to be not more than 20,000, half in the hills and half in the plain. According to the Sultan there is a similar number of cattle, mostly in the hills, which provide the staple sustenance of the inhabitants there and which also produce a not inconsiderable

export of clarified butter (ghee). In the plains there are extensive plantations of coco-nut palms, the produce of which is also partly exported, and a number of gardens of fruit trees and vegetables, of which the most noteworthy is that directed personally by the Sultan at Mamura where he seems to be succeeding in growing experimentally most varieties of tropical and sub-tropical fruit. The water resources in the plain are by no means fully developed. Much more irrigation could be done and was done in past ages by underground channels from sources in the hills, and the possibility of artesian wells has barely been examined. I believe that the possibility of a large-scale increase in the cattle population in the hills would also deserve careful study, possibly even with a view to building up a supply of beef for export. The Sultan is conscious in a general way of the great opportunities for development provided in Dhofar and is making such progress as his limited funds and technical knowledge permit. He would welcome further technical advice. I am dealing with this question at greater length in a letter to the department. His Highness's energies have lately been concentrated on building a road through the hills. This has almost reached the gravel plain, on which he believes he can travel by car without difficulty to Ras al Hadd or to Buraimi. He drove me himself in a lorry up the road so far as it has been built. It has been done by one of the Sultan's men with no previous engineering experience and could no doubt be greatly improved, but the fact is that it is now possible for wheeled transport to reach the top of these hills even in the monsoon season and this is in itself no mean achievement.

3. The Sultan's rule in Dhofar is essentially autocratic. It is in fact run not so much as part of the State but as a private domain or fief of which he is the personal owner as well as sovereign. It is impossible to say on such short acquaintance how these conditions are appreciated by the inhabitants. The Sultan's rule is, at least on occasion, harsh. I understand he has cut off the water supply of a village in order to provide greater supplies for his own gardens. But he has been able to maintain so far undisputed rule with the help of only a small bodyguard which is comparatively ill-equipped and poorly organised. I was puzzled why this uniquely fertile area, which must appear to the inhabitants of the rest of Arabia as a kind of terrestrial Paradise, is not constantly invaded by

Bedouin from the interior in search at least of momentary plunder, if not of a settled agricultural life. The Sultan seemed to think that this was due partly to the robust defence which would be put up by the inhabitants of the Dhofar hills against invaders, and partly to the insulating effect of the mainly waterless gravel plain along his northern and eastern boundaries and the more or less impassable great sands beyond.

4. Having seen both Muscat and Dhofar I am no longer surprised that the Sultan chooses to spend a considerable amount of his time in the latter. Indeed it is evidence of at least some feeling of his responsibilities that he normally submits for the greater part of the year to the stifling atmosphere of Muscat. Having previously witnessed the remote and ineffective despotism with which he conducts his affairs in Muscat and the rather futile obstinacy which he displayed on his visit to London this year I was surprised and pleased to find that by comparison he was in Dhofar cheerful and enterprising. He still did not aspire to the authority of the traditional Arab leader, based on the open exercise of superior personality in surroundings of apparent democracy, and his relations with his subjects were more those of master to serf than of leader to follower. But in dealing with physical obstacles he showed unusual energy and success.

5. As I have stated elsewhere, the Sultan has formed the idea of using Dhofar as a main base from which to reassert the authority of his Government for at any rate the international interests of Oman. As further evidence of his acceptance of a more forward policy he spontaneously made the proposal I have communicated to your Lordship by telegram with regard to the restoration of his authority in the neighbourhood of Buraimi. He seemed ready to make a new and serious effort to proceed with agriculture and fisheries development projects which have been lying before him for many years, if only we could help him to find suitable experts to put them into effect. He responded much more favourably than hitherto to my suggestions of opening air communications with Muscat and Salalah and he even appeared ready to consider the unification of two out of the three small forces in his territories to which he has hitherto strongly objected. It remains to be seen whether this unexpectedly forthcoming attitude was due only to the invigorating air and freedom from worry which he enjoys in

Dhofar, and whether it will evaporate with his return to the climatically and politically oppressive atmosphere of Muscat.

6. As I have reported it is expected that an advance party of the new American holders of the oil concession for Dhofar will arrive there this month to explore and survey likely areas in the province. I sincerely hope that Petroleum Concessions (Limited) were right in believing that there is no commercially exploitable oil in Dhofar. If they are proved wrong we shall have lost a great opportunity. In any case I feel that in accordance with normal American practice the American interests concerned are likely to meet in an accommodating spirit any requests which the Sultan may make to them for technical assistance and equipment for developing the resources of Dhofar even outside the obligations under their concession. The possibilities of development there are so obvious and apparently so easy compared with those of most other parts of Arabia, that I cannot escape the fear that even if no large quantity of oil is found we may see the successful application of American enterprise to this province, which will be in sharp contrast to the failure of British interests to make any notable progress so far in the rest of the Sultan's territories (by no means entirely through their own fault). There is a real danger that Dhofar might be held up as an example of what Americans can do in Arabia with implied criticism of the inadequacy of our efforts in the areas for which we are responsible either governmentally or through British concession holdings. With these thoughts in mind it was reassuring that in the course of our discussion the Sultan said that if oil was found in Dhofar or even if the exploration activities of the Americans developed to any large extent he would wish to engage

the services of one or more British officials to act as liaison between him and the oil company, and to advise him generally on the disposal of such funds as he might receive. It will clearly be most important that we provide him with good men for these posts if they materialise. I also sounded the Sultan cautiously about the possibility of more regular British representation in Dhofar. He said that he would welcome more frequent and longer visits from myself and Her Majesty's Consul-General in Muscat, but indicated clearly that, for the time being at any rate, he did not wish to consider the possibility of the establishment of a permanent British office there. In this connexion I would hazard the guess that if the American oil company are successful in their search for oil or look like spending any considerable time in exploration, the United States Government may desire to open at least a part-time Consular Office to look after them.

7. I feel that in the past we may to some extent have neglected the possibilities of Dhofar. We can now show our interest in the first place by seeking to provide appropriate technical help in the development of agriculture and water resources. (The Sultan said he would be glad to consider a visit by Colonel Merrylees who recently investigated water supplies in Kuwait and on the Trucial Coast.) Secondly, I would hope that we can decide to view with sympathy any practical efforts which the Sultan makes to use Dhofar as a base from which to extend his authority.

8. I am sending copies of this despatch to the British Middle East Office at Fayid and Beirut and Her Majesty's Consul-General at Muscat.

I have, &c.

B. A. B. BURROWS.

EA 1017/14

No. 14

CONDITIONS IN QATAR

Mr. Burrows to Lord Salisbury. (Received September 28)

(No. 91. Confidential) *Bahrain,*
My Lord Marquess, *September 21, 1953.*

I visited Dohah and other places in Qatar from September 8 to September 11 and I

have the honour to submit the following first impressions on the situation there.

2. Qatar is a large territory by Persian Gulf standards. It is a peninsula roughly

100 miles from north to south and an average of about 40 to 50 miles wide from east to west. There is a local legend that it was once separated from the mainland by a channel joining the present inlets on either side of the base of the peninsula. It is unfortunate that this is no longer the case.

3. The surface of the territory consists almost without exception either of a hard gravel plain or, especially towards the south, of sand dunes. Its aridity and lack of vegetation is remarkable even in Arabia. The population is not known with any accuracy. A few years ago it was thought to be about 10,000-15,000, of whom a number were migrant Bedouin. Now, with the growth of oil activities and consequential development of other kinds, the numbers may have grown by some 50 per cent. The capital is the small town of Dohah situated not unattractively round an extensive bay on the east coast. The other centres of population are the Qatar Petroleum Company (Q.P.C.) port at Umm Said, a few miles further south, and their fields and administrative headquarters at Dukhan about half-way up the western side of the territory.

4. The Q.P.C., who have the oil concession for the whole of the territory and up to the 3-mile limit of territorial waters are producing crude oil at the rate of about 4 million tons a year. The Shell Company have fairly recently acquired a concession for the Qatar seabed and are investing very considerable sums in the attempt to discover oil within the area, which we have indicated to them as being included without any reasonable doubt in the seabed area, the exact limits of which remain to be determined in relation to the claims of the other States concerned. The Shell Company Headquarters are at Dohah.

5. The revenue accruing to the State from the oil companies' operations will probably be about £6-7 million for the current financial year. There is virtually no other revenue. Pearling, on which Qatar depended for its existence before the discovery of oil, has almost entirely ceased. About one-quarter of the revenue is divided among the members of the ruling family of the Al Thani, whose numbers unfortunately amount to well over 100. The remainder is divided between the current expenditure of the Government, new buildings and development projects, and reserves. Some-what over half a million pounds has already been invested in British funds and it is hoped that a further amount may be so

invested next year. Until a few years ago the Government machinery was virtually non-existent. It has been the chief task of Mr. Hancock, the Adviser to the Qatar Government, to establish a simple administrative framework and to draw up a budget. He has been helped in the latter task by a member of a British firm of accountants working in the Middle East and he has succeeded in securing the Ruler's approval in principle to the division of expenditure which he has recommended. The budget for the financial year which has just begun will shortly be available and will be forwarded to your Lordship. We have in the past had some rather strenuous arguments with the Ruler about the amount of money to be allowed to the members of his family. This was not raised with me during my visit, but Mr. Hancock expects that the subject will crop up again in the fairly near future, especially if increased revenues are obtained owing to an increase of Q.P.C.'s profits. My own feeling is that it is less important to argue over the exact amount of these allowances within reasonable limits than to insist on strict adherence to a budgetary system and the separation of Government from private expenditure. It is certainly an advantageous by-product of the generous scale of allowances obtaining in Qatar that the members of the ruling family are not compelled to supplement inadequate allowances by the practices to which the comparative parsimony of the Ruler of Kuwait obliges his relations to turn. Another point which can usefully be made in this connection is that if the ruling family are to get this large proportion of the revenue, and even more if they are to get an increase in their allowances, it is the duty of the Ruler to see that a proportionate advantage is obtained by the rest of his subjects and that to this end inflation must be avoided and prices kept down so as to ensure that the inevitable increases in wages are real and not only apparent.

6. My brief inspection of the development works and sites and discussion of the programme with Mr. Hancock gave me the impression that the plans are sensible and well-balanced and that some of the mistakes made in Kuwait owing to over-hasty planning and over-lavish execution may be avoided. Rational planning has no doubt been easier since so much smaller amounts of money are involved, but my general impression at present is that there is some hope of Qatar growing up organically from

existing foundations, whereas in Kuwait a new layer of "progress" is being imposed on antiquated foundations with which it has no natural connection and which may well crumble in the process. But we are still at a very early stage in Qatar and this may prove to be an unduly optimistic picture.

7. The Ruler, Sheikh Ali, was not originally destined for this position, having always been thought greatly inferior in capacity to his younger brother Hamed. Indeed, the files in this office abound in disparaging references to Ali's ovine or bovine qualities. Nevertheless when, after Hamed's premature death their father, Sheikh Abdullah, decided to abdicate, Ali was accepted by the family and by Her Majesty's Government as the natural successor. It is, however, alleged that as a condition of his accession he had to agree with the Beni Hamed faction of the family that he would in turn be succeeded by their representative. My own first impression of Sheikh Ali is that he has perhaps been somewhat maligned. He is clearly not a born leader of men and he has allowed himself to fall regrettably under the influence of Abdullah Darwish, of whom more later, but he is not altogether lacking in dignity and I found him personally friendly and forthcoming. His father Sheikh Abdullah is still alive, though of a very considerable age, and lives at Riyan, a village a few miles from Dohah. Though very infirm and almost entirely toothless, he still exercises a considerable and, probably on the whole, harmful influence on his son and on affairs generally.

8. The rest of the family consist almost without exception of a factious and irresponsible rabble devoted to feuds between their various clans reminiscent of nothing more than those of the Montagues and Capulets. Fights between them are set off by petty incidents strongly suggestive of Shakespeare in modern dress, of which a frequent example is the refusal of a Cadillac driven by one faction to give way to a Buick driven by another when they meet in one of Dohah's narrow streets. As a result of a shooting affray shortly before my visit, the whole of the Beni Ahmed faction has been temporarily banished to Saudi Arabia, and the youth who actually fired the shot and his two companions are in prison as a result of the enterprise and initiative of Mr. Hancock and a British police officer, which has raised the prestige of the Police Force. The Ruler's son Ahmed, who attended the Coronation as his

father's representative, appears to be considerably superior to the rest of the family in integrity and judgment, and it is a great pity, if true, that his chances of succeeding are not greater.

9. But the outstanding elements in the Qatar scene is the Darwish family. These are four brothers, probably not of pure Arab, but of partly Persian origin, of which the most prominent is Abdullah. Technically his only position is that of the Ruler's special representative for dealing with the oil companies. In addition he has taken upon himself all the attributes of the traditional Grand Vizier of Arab history, and in his commercial capacity has a virtual monopoly of the supply of building material, contracting and labour. It should be said in his favour that he has not so far pressed for the expenditure of the State revenues on development projects at a higher rate than seems to be justified. But in almost every other respect his position poses the greatest single problem for the future stability and good government of Qatar and for its relations with Her Majesty's Government. He has proved a keen and successful bargainer in negotiations with the oil companies and has thus naturally, and to a large extent rightly, earned the gratitude of the Ruler who now relies on him for all kinds of business in additions to that strictly related to oil affairs. It was a rather unpleasant spectacle to see how the Ruler is nervous of answering the simplest question in Darwish's presence without first making sure of the latter's view. The dominating, not to say domineering, influence which Abdullah Darwish thus exercises has incurred the resentment of the Ruler's son Ahmed and some other members of the ruling family. This was exacerbated by a report in a Lebanese newspaper—probably inspired by one of Darwish's commercial rivals—to the effect that he aspired to the succession. These were rumours that an attempt might be made on his life and he took to sleeping at Umm Said rather than at Dohah. He has now apparently ceased this practice, but is said to sleep in a room which also accommodates no less than fifteen guards.

10. During my visit Darwish was profuse in expressions of respect and friendship for Her Majesty's Government. In the course of discussing an alleged statement to the press in the Lebanon by Sheikh Abdullah Mubabrak of Kuwait, to the effect that Kuwait was now ready to enter the Arab

League, he remarked spontaneously that it was absurd to suppose that without British protection Kuwait would remain independent for more than few minutes. Such remarks need not mean anything at all and would no doubt continue to be made however much Darwish was plotting to betray our interests, but I gather it is at least an improvement over his previous performance that they should be made at all. They were warmly echoed by the Ruler.

11. I have referred in separate correspondence to the possibility of British competition in securing contracts for development work in Qatar and to the difficulties likely to be encountered from the Darwish monopoly by British firms seeking such work. It is clear that even apart from this commercial aspect of the matter it is going to be one of our chief problems in Qatar whether we should have an early "show down" with Darwish or whether we should go on the principle of giving him rope and hoping that he will be hanged by his compatriots. I am not prepared at present to suggest a general answer to this question, but I have recommended, both to the Political Officer, Mr. Hancock, and the Q.P.C., that in handling their innumerable arguments with him on particular points they should not be afraid when sure of their ground, of holding it vigorously.

12. One of the more tiresome aspects of Abdullah Darwish's activity is his habit of picking quarrels with the Q.P.C. on every possible occasion and to a lesser extent with the Shell Company. His motive in this is probably partly to assert his own importance, partly to show the Ruler that he is indispensable, and partly the hope that he may blackmail the Q.P.C. either into paying him to keep quiet or better still into giving him a place on the local management to which he is known to aspire. He has been astute on picking on the many weak points in the Q.P.C. Concession and exploiting them to the utmost. My first impression is that the Company have not dealt with this situation with all the wisdom that might have been hoped, but have allowed themselves to play Darwish's game by entering into interminable wrangles, sometimes on matters in which their case is not watertight. I propose to discuss this situation further with Mr. Heseldin, the Q.P.C. General Manager, on his return from leave.

13. In the course of my visit I had a somewhat rambling and inconclusive conversation with Sheikh Ali about the Zubarah question which has intermittently

upset relations between Qatar and Bahrain for many years past. I also took the opportunity during a visit to the Q.P.C. installations at Dukhan to fly low over the site of Zubarah in order to have some personal appreciation of the topography. As is well known one of the grievances of the Ruler of Qatar is that earlier this year a party of Bahrain school children landed at Zubarah and wrote the word "Bahrain" on the walls of a fort erected near the ruins of the town by the then Ruler of Qatar after an earlier series of incidents in 1936. I was startled at the size of the inscription which is in English capitals and must be some 10-feet high, entirely defacing one wall of the fort. Along-side the inscription is an obvious, but unflattering caricature of Sheikh Ali. I felt that on any other assumption, but that the whole Zubarah area is Bahrain territory, Sheikh Ali has a grievance. Having now heard the views of the Rulers of Bahrain and Qatar on this quarrel I am considering whether any useful step can be taken to settle it. I cannot pretend that I am at present optimistic of success.

14. So far as relations between Qatar and Her Majesty's Government are concerned I feel that the present situation is not unsatisfactory, though the future holds a number of question marks. A great deal of the machinery of government is in the hands of the British Adviser. The Police Force is commanded by British officers and is becoming a useful and effective body. British subjects are employed in suitable numbers in the public works and public health sections of the administration. There has, so far as can be judged, been a reasonably satisfactory use of the sterling obtained from the oil companies and demands for dollars have been moderate. We may run into difficulty over the question of introducing British contractors in competition with the Lebanese concern with which Abdullah Darwish is associated, but we cannot at present say that there is discrimination against British traders since no very serious attempt appears to have been made to secure their introduction into the field. Politically Qatar is conscious of belonging to the Arabian mainland as well as to the Gulf and there are traditional relations between the ruling family and that of Saudi Arabia. We can never hope that the Qataris would adopt a strongly anti-Saudi attitude, but I see no reason at present to suspect that they would like to contemplate the exchange of our protection for that

of Ibn Saud. There is some feeling in the mind of Sheikh Ali and of Abdullah Darwish and possibly others that with the size of its territory and with its newly acquired revenues, Qatar is now at least on a par with Bahrain, if not Kuwait, and that they should therefore be treated with the same respect and dignity, whereas, in fact, the title accorded to the Ruler is considerably inferior, and our office there has hitherto been subordinate to that in Bahrain. I have now been authorised to increase the status of the office at Dohah to a separate Agency and I propose to make this change shortly when a suitable opportunity presents itself. Similar resentment of inferiority is apparent in the desire that goods should be imported directly into Qatar and not through agents in Bahrain, discussed in Bahrain despatch O.T. No. 39 of July 27 last, with which I entirely agree. But undoubtedly the biggest question mark is that of the general attitude of Abdullah Darwish. His power is such

that if he decided to make himself our enemy he could do considerable harm to our position and we should have difficulty in keeping the Ruler up to the mark in opposition to any dangerous tendencies which Darwish might encourage. The moral, so far as I can at present judge, is not that we must base our policy on keeping his good graces at all costs, but that, apart from minor matters, on which as I have suggested we should stand firm when we are on good ground, we should choose the conditions very carefully if we decide to have a major show-down with him, particularly if it is a matter in which his own financial prospects are involved.

15. I am sending copies of this despatch to the Political Agent, Bahrain, the Political Officer, Dohah, and British Middle East Office, Beirut.

I have, &c.

B. A. B. BURROWS.

EA 10111/18

No. 15

COMMENTS ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION AT KUWAIT

Mr. B. Burrows to Mr. Eden

(No. 103. Confidential) *Bahrain,*
Sir, *October 26, 1953.*

With reference to Mr. Pelly's despatch to me No. 14 of October 19, I have the honour to report that I visited Kuwait from October 20 to October 23 and to submit certain further comments on the situation there and on your telegrams No. 1225 and No. 1248 of October 13 and 17.

2. I had three talks with the Ruler which were largely of a social nature or dealt with business unconnected with the recent developments in Kuwait. I found him apparently calm and he made no complaint at all about our pressure or the general state of our relations with him. I took an early opportunity of saying that Mr. Pelly had expressed to His Highness the views of Her Majesty's Government on the rumours that had recently been current. I had been distressed at these rumours and was glad to know that His Highness was remaining in power. His Highness's reply was characteristically obscure but the up-shot of it was that he had his rights (*i.e.*, presumably either

to retire into private life if he so wished, or to get his own way), but that when he had talked of these rights the people had come to him with tears in their eyes and begged him not to leave them. At his farewell call on me the Ruler, after talking about the plans for his journey to India and his return in six weeks' time, said spontaneously that he would continue to follow a course which would be to the benefit of his country and his people and which he hoped would secure the respect of Her Majesty's Government. I assured him that he already had their respect and that we would continue to watch with interest the progress of Kuwait under his guidance and the steps which he might take to this end. As regards the arrangements for carrying on the Government in His Highness's absence he merely said that these would be the same as during his absence earlier this year. This means that Abdullah Mubarak will act for the Ruler in official and ceremonial matters and will be free to carry on the work of his own department, but that there will not be any

appreciable central direction over the activities of the other departments and in particular over those controlled by Fahad. The difference between this state of affairs and that which prevails when the Ruler is in Kuwait is not so great as the uninitiated observer might expect.

2. I am satisfied that unless the Ruler has been deliberately deceiving Mr. Pelly and myself, which would be entirely contrary to his character, his present intention is to return from India after six weeks and thereafter to continue to exercise the same degree of control as he has done in the past. Apart from what he had said to Mr. Pelly and myself on the subject of his own position, he discussed with me with evident interest and animation the question of the next steps to be taken to bring water to Kuwait from Iraq and the question of oil exploration in the islands off Kuwait and the neutral zone to which a claim has been made by the Saudis (Kuwait telegram No. 28, Saving, of October 20 to you), thus indicating his continued concern in affairs of state. There is no evidence that Abdullah Mubarak or Fahad will make any move to upset the existing order during the Ruler's absence. Mubarak's gendarmerie are still standing to at short notice, but it would perhaps not be an unnatural precaution for this to be continued to tide over the actual departure of the Ruler. Mubarak did not repeat to me the enquiry he had made to Mr. Pelly (Kuwait telegram No. 263 to me of October 12), about our attitude to his claim to the succession. The only matter of business which he raised with me was the immediate need for a new aerodrome. Fahad, for his part, seemed, as Mr. Pelly has reported, to be carrying on with business as usual as though there was no likelihood of any major change in the situation. I found that with reference to paragraph 2 of your telegram No. 1248 of October 17, Mr. Pelly and Mr. Reilly were coming to the opinion that Fahad is perhaps not as black (metaphorically) as he has been painted and that our relations with him will repay careful cultivation. My own impression of him in two conversations was better than at my previous visit and it is noteworthy that he has himself proposed to make a fairly lengthy visit to England next summer in order to look at factories, building techniques, water distribution systems and, in addition, the historic buildings, which he told me he would like particularly to see as this was a thing which did not exist in America. If we can make

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this visit a success it will clearly be of immense advantage to us. Apart from this I think that we must take such opportunities as may be offered of showing in the future that we are not exclusively devoted to Mubarak. It is at present unlikely that Fahad will succeed to the throne, but even if he does not do so he will continue to be a power in the land whom we ought to have on our side rather than against us. Mr. Pelly suggests in paragraph 14 of his despatch under reference that this may involve acquiescing in unfavourable treatment towards our commercial interests. I would hope that we may not have to go so far as this and I would certainly not recommend that we should acquiesce in discrimination against British trade. What has happened up to now is that our relations with Fahad have, in his eyes, been largely taken up with our apparent attempts to secure discrimination in favour of it.

3. As regards the question raised in your telegrams under reference about the possibility of our bringing about the succession of Jabir al Ahmed, I have nothing to add to paragraphs 13 and 14 of Mr. Pelly's despatch and paragraph 3 of my telegram No. 819 of October 13. It has been one of my objects in recommending the appointment of an additional third secretary to the staff of the Agency in Kuwait to make possible more extensive contacts with the younger members of the ruling family and I hope that we may as a result obtain a better assessment of Jabir al Ahmed and greater opportunities for contact with him.

4. The talk and rumours of abdication superimposed on the notorious difficulty of securing decisions from the Ruler even in normal times have stimulated in some quarters discussion of constitutional and administrative changes. I found that Jabri, the Syrian "Chief Engineer" in the Public Works Department, who in fact exercises a much wider influence than his position would indicate, had been giving particular thought to these problems and had prepared the draft of a letter to the Ruler proposing two important changes. He had shown this draft to Mr. Reilly and had agreed to discuss it with me before sending it in. We accordingly had an interesting talk with him on which I have asked Mr. Pelly to report to you. Jabri's first proposal in his draft letter was to create a general Secretariat directly under the Ruler which would co-ordinate the proposals of the different Government Departments and which would

D* 2

THE SUPPLY OF WATER TO KUWAIT

(1)

Her Majesty's Embassy, Bagdad, to the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Note Verbale

Her Britannic Majesty's Embassy presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and has the honour, on instructions from Her Majesty's Acting Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to inform the Ministry that Her Majesty's Government have been asked by His Highness the Ruler of Kuwait to seek, on his behalf, the views of the Iraq Government on the question of the supply of water to Kuwait.

His Highness is anxious to make arrangements for the supply of fresh water from the Shatt al Arab to his Kingdom. During his visit to Bagdad last year, His Highness discussed the question with the Iraq Government and understood that the Iraqi authorities would be willing to

approve any arrangements for the supply of water that might be convenient to the Government of Kuwait.

His Highness wishes accordingly to put a scheme into motion in the near future and has asked that Her Majesty's Embassy should obtain confirmation that the Iraq Government are agreeable to the proposal in principle and should also enquire whether they would be prepared to grant facilities for a preliminary survey.

Her Britannic Majesty's Embassy would be grateful to learn as soon as possible what reply the Iraq Government would wish made to His Highness the Ruler on this matter.

Her Britannic Majesty's Embassy avails itself of this opportunity to renew the expression of its highest consideration.

(2)

The Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Her Majesty's Embassy, Bagdad

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs presents its compliments to Her Britannic Majesty's Embassy, Bagdad, and has the honour to refer to the embassy's note No. 459 of September 7, 1953, and to state that the Iraqi Government agrees in principle to the

proposal relating to the carriage of water from Shatt-el-Arab to Koweit.

In requesting the esteemed embassy to communicate the foregoing to His Highness the Amir of Koweit, the Ministry avails itself of the opportunity to express its highest consideration and esteem.

FRONTIER DISPUTE: ATTITUDE OF THE SULTAN TO THE PROPOSED ARBITRATION

Mr. Burrows to Mr. Eden. (Received December 7)

(No. 1013. Confidential) Bahrain, December 7, 1953. (Telegraphic)

Chauncy has now seen the Sultan who has explained to him his attitude to the proposed arbitration. He reiterated that it is

not the western frontier of Oman which is in dispute between himself and the Saudis, but the much narrower question of the ownership of Hamasa. With regard to the rest of his frontier, he stated his claim to

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REVIEW NOT COMPLETED

frontier dispute between the Saudi Arabian Government and Her Majesty's Government, probably the most significant aspect of Saudi growth is their increasingly firm attitude in this dispute and their apparent policy of expansion. The 1951 conference in London had provided for the cessation of activities in the disputed areas by both sides pending the outcome of a frontier conference which might involve the appointment of a fact-finding commission. This conference took place at Dammam in February 1952 and discussed the Saudi Arabian frontiers where these marched with those of the Sheikdoms of Qatar and Abu Dhabi. The Saudis had never previously given any sign of compromise but they now showed themselves completely intransigent. The conference was therefore adjourned sine die with no other result than the hardening of tempers and opinions.

AUDI ARABIA RESPONSE

19

AL REVIEW FOR 1952

(Received 12th January)

During the spring and summer communications were exchanged which revealed a sharp difference of opinion between the Saudi Arabian Government and Her Majesty's Government on the sovereignty of two islands lying off the coast of the Neutral Zone. This claim was a novel one to which the Saudis were probably encouraged by the Pacific Western Oil Corporation in whose concession the islands would lie were they held to belong to the Neutral Zone and not to Kuwait. The question of the Bahrain frontiers was, however, almost entirely quiescent while those in connexion with the land frontiers of Kuwait Neutral Zone simmered but did not boil.

3. Despite protests by both sides against alleged improper activities by the other it was generally agreed that the frontier dispute should remain dormant until the conference could be resumed in the autumn. On 30th September, however, Turki bin Ataishan, a Saudi Amir, entered Hamasah, one of the two villages in the Buraimi oasis claimed by the Sultan of Muscat with a number of armed followers, having in his journey there crossed the undisputed territory of the Sheikh of Abu Dhabi, who claims the rest of the Buraimi oasis. Her Majesty's Government, acting on behalf of Abu Dhabi and at the request of the Sultan of Muscat, asked for Turki's immediate withdrawal. On this being refused some of the Trucial Coast Levies were despatched to the Buraimi oasis in an attempt to check the serious effect which Turki's bribery and promises were having upon the loyalty of neighbouring tribes. The Sultan also gathered his forces at Sohar. Her Majesty's Government, foreseeing the imminent possibility of an armed clash, then proposed that all parties should withdraw their forces. This, too, was refused and an atmosphere of crisis reigned in Riyadh; the King declaring that he would rather see Turki dead than withdraw him and claiming that Buraimi and much other undefined territory was his by ancestral right. The King did, however, put forward as his own a three-point proposal, made by the American Ambassador, for a standstill at Buraimi, the essence of which was that "life was to revert to its

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CHAPTER II—SAUDI ARABIA

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

ES 1011/1

No. 19

SAUDI-ARABIA: ANNUAL REVIEW FOR 1952

Mr. Pelham to Mr. Eden. (Received 12th January)

(No. 4. Confidential) *Jedda,*
Sir, *1st January, 1953.*

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith my annual review of events and conditions in Saudi Arabia during the year 1952, for the preparation of which I am principally indebted to my Oriental Secretary, Mr. John Thomson.

2. I am sending copies of this despatch to the head of the B.M.E.O. at Fayid and to the Political Resident, Persian Gulf.

I have, &c.

G. C. PELHAM.

Enclosure in No. 19

Saudi Arabia: Annual Review for 1952

During the year Saudi Arabia has taken another step into adolescence. She has begun to feel her strength and to show it. Though her growth in prudence has not been commensurate with her vast increase in wealth, yet she has begun to realise the need for self-discipline. In brief, Saudi Arabia has increased in political stature and importance.

2. While few people outside the select groups of the King's advisers are consciously aware of the long-drawn-out frontier dispute between the Saudi Arabian Government and Her Majesty's Government, probably the most significant aspect of Saudi growth is their increasingly firm attitude in this dispute and their apparent policy of expansion. The 1951 conference in London had provided for the cessation of activities in the disputed areas by both sides pending the outcome of a frontier conference which might involve the appointment of a fact-finding commission. This conference took place at Dammam in February 1952 and discussed the Saudi Arabian frontiers where these marched with those of the Sheikdoms of Qatar and Abu Dhabi. The Saudis had never previously given any sign of compromise but they now showed themselves completely intransigent. The conference was therefore adjourned *sine die* with no other result than the hardening of tempers and opinions.

During the spring and summer communications were exchanged which revealed a sharp difference of opinion between the Saudi Arabian Government and Her Majesty's Government on the sovereignty of two islands lying off the coast of the Neutral Zone. This claim was a novel one to which the Saudis were probably encouraged by the Pacific Western Oil Corporation in whose concession the islands would lie were they held to belong to the Neutral Zone and not to Kuwait. The question of the Bahrain frontiers was, however, almost entirely quiescent while those in connexion with the land frontiers of Kuwait Neutral Zone simmered but did not boil.

3. Despite protests by both sides against alleged improper activities by the other it was generally agreed that the frontier dispute should remain dormant until the conference could be resumed in the autumn. On 30th September, however, Turki bin Ataishan, a Saudi Amir, entered Hamasah, one of the two villages in the Buraimi oasis claimed by the Sultan of Muscat with a number of armed followers, having in his journey there crossed the undisputed territory of the Sheikh of Abu Dhabi, who claims the rest of the Buraimi oasis. Her Majesty's Government, acting on behalf of Abu Dhabi and at the request of the Sultan of Muscat, asked for Turki's immediate withdrawal. On this being refused some of the Trucial Coast Levies were despatched to the Buraimi oasis in an attempt to check the serious effect which Turki's bribery and promises were having upon the loyalty of neighbouring tribes. The Sultan also gathered his forces at Sohar. Her Majesty's Government, foreseeing the imminent possibility of an armed clash, then proposed that all parties should withdraw their forces. This, too, was refused and an atmosphere of crisis reigned in Riyadh; the King declaring that he would rather see Turki dead than withdraw him and claiming that Buraimi and much other undefined territory was his by ancestral right. The King did, however, put forward as his own a three-point proposal, made by the American Ambassador, for a standstill at Buraimi, the essence of which was that "life was to revert to its

normal course." Her Majesty's Government accepted this proposal and an agreement was later negotiated clarifying its terms. This Standstill Agreement has not been scrupulously observed by Turki, who has continued his efforts, though in a modified way, to suborn the tribes.

4. The Saudis have insisted that the frontier question in the Buraimi region must be treated separately from the other frontier questions. For the former they proposed a plebiscite to be carried out by a tripartite commission in which the Americans would participate. For the remaining frontiers of Qatar and Abu Dhabi the Saudis reverted to the idea of reconvening the Dammam conference with the evident intention of having a fact-finding commission appointed. Though the Americans have since refused to take part in a plebiscite, the Saudis have persisted in their proposals and have so far refused to consider the counter proposal made by Her Majesty's Government for an impartial settlement of the whole problem by arbitration. The Americans after much hesitation supported the idea of arbitration, but did not express their views to the Saudis until the latter had refused the offer of Her Majesty's Government.

5. The Saudi attitude stands revealed as a compound of King Ibn Saud's passionate regard for his honour, his ancestral rights and his longing to be looked upon as the great Arab monarch together with the chauvinism and opportunism of some of his principal advisers who have been bred up as Arab nationalists. The Saudi process of ever-widening claims and creeping attrition has proceeded *pari passu* with the increase of Saudi Arabian power and wealth and with their supposed diminution of the influence of Britain in the Persian Gulf.

6. So far Anglo-Saudi relations in general do not appear to have suffered as a result of the frontier dispute, but serious restrictions have been put upon the operations of the British-manned Desert Locust Survey. In common with the Americans and French we of course incur a good deal of odium as the oppressors of Arab national aspirations and as the creators and protectors of Israel, but while this detracts from our popularity it has not yet seriously injured our interests in Saudi Arabia. There is still a surprisingly large fund of respect and friendship for Britain; more so in the Hejaz than in Nejd, where the Americans have a virtual monopoly. The chief of our friends is probably still King Ibn Saud himself who, whatever else he may

forget in his declining years, will always remember the respect which in the past we engendered in Saudi Arabia as a Great Power.

7. The Americans, who are now overwhelmingly the predominant foreign influence in the country, have a position solidly based upon the Arabian-American Oil Company, which produces most of the wealth of Saudi Arabia. Moreover, the United States have an air base at Dhahran and are now busy expanding their forces in this country at the request of the Saudi Arabian Government so that they may train a small, but well-equipped Saudi army, air force and even navy. Despite their great resources and influence the Americans are determined to tread warily and to profit from what they believe to have been our mistakes. This policy, which as a natural corollary involves keeping clear of the British connexion, has brought both the Aramco and the United States Government more trouble than they expected, for the Saudis have proved to be niggling negotiators, jealous of foreign wealth and encroachment. The Americans, however, have been steadily strengthening their position and there are now few Government departments whose business is not conducted without the benefit of American advice. During the past year at least one new American adviser of one sort or another has arrived in the country every two weeks. It seems that this rate will be maintained in 1953. The American Ambassador is sometimes summoned to Riyadh to give advice on foreign affairs other than Saudi-American relations.

8. Saudi Arabia's relations with foreign nations other than the United Kingdom and the United States have been relatively unimportant. In the Arab world she has continued her policy of maintaining the *status quo* and was therefore much perturbed by the possibility that Iraq might absorb Jordan at the time of King Talal's abdication. There is little doubt that Saudi money is covertly employed in her sister Arab countries to further Saudi policy. In the main, however, Saudi Arabia relies upon the Egyptian connexion and the Arab League. The natural consequence is that Saudi Arabia has refused to proceed in such matters as M.E.D.O. or the status of Jerusalem without a lead from Egypt. But when it comes to spiting the Jews, the violent prejudices of some of the King's advisers tend to push Saudi Arabia ahead of Egypt and has actually led the Saudis to be

the first to introduce a total ban upon trade with Cyprus.

9. The French and Turks are held in small regard in Saudi Arabia, but it is possible that Germany might acquire a respected position here. Various German commercial concerns have in the past year been taking an active interest in the country and the German firm of Siemens has recently acquired the very important contract for telecommunications in Saudi Arabia. More progress would have been made but for the German reparations to Israel, which have incurred the wrath of some of the King's advisers and made them threaten to boycott all German goods. A German trade commission proceeding to Saudi Arabia in November was unable to get Saudi visas and had to turn back in Cairo.

10. The Government of Saudi Arabia is a benevolent despotism in which the character of the King and his principal advisers is still of paramount importance. Ibn Saud, though less able than ever to comprehend the complexities of modern administration, shows no sign of relaxing his control, nor does it seem likely that he will die in the immediate future. When he does, however, the Crown Prince seems to be assured of a peaceful succession. It was already known that the latter was consulted on almost all matters though the final word remained with the King, but the events of this summer greatly increased his stature, especially in the Hejaz, and thus inevitably diminished the authority of his brother, the Amir Feisal, and the latter's son, the Amir Abdulla Feisal. The Crown Prince came to the Hejaz to lead the pilgrimage in his father's place. He stayed on to reorganise the administration of the Hejaz on the Nejd model and to that end he introduced several of his own men into important positions.

11. In his activities the Crown Prince was by no means wholly self-interested, for while he may have been over-hasty and unaware of the extent of his problems it is at least certain that the administration of the Hejaz needed overhauling. Already several beneficial results are observable. Perhaps the most important of these is also the least tangible. A feeling has been growing up amongst the more responsible of the well-to-do that affairs ought to be conducted in a more regular manner and that it is the business of Government to provide services which conduce to the general health and well-being. Money and religion are still the chief subjects of conversation, but such topics as street lighting and

paving, drainage, refuse disposal and health regulations are occasionally spoken of with approval. More notable still, some improvement is actually being made in these directions, encouraged partly by American advice, but even more by the introduction into the administration of various non-Saudi Arabs, particularly Egyptians, Syrians and Lebanese.

12. Concurrently has come a tightening of the administration. The Crown Prince has reformed and speeded up the cumbersome procedure of the Hejaz Shari'a courts. He has abolished the use of fee stamps as being contrary to the legal code of Islam. He has reorganised the Department of Pilgrimage Affairs and Security. A new streamlined tariff drafted by American advisers has been issued and it has just been decreed that not even the Royal family shall be exempted from it. The Crown Prince has reinforced the Royal decree banning the import and sale of liquor with offers of rewards to informers. He has breathed new life into the moribund Societies of Virtue which, under the leadership of a strict Nejd, are taking a prying interest into public and private morality.

13. Such signs of improvement do not mean that the Saudi character has changed, but it does seem possible now that the country will enjoy some of the more solid material blessings of Western civilisation. There is a considerable though quite indiscriminating desire for modernism which is tending to shape Saudi Arabia into the half-baked mould of the other Arab States. There are, however, two local conditions which may give Saudi development a somewhat different cast from that of most of the rest of the Arab world. Partly because she has not been occupied by a Western Power and partly through ignorance and wealth the Saudis are barely if at all corroded by a feeling of inferiority. Then, too, the classical Arab structure of society with discreet and self-contained social classes is likely to remain dominant for a long time to come. Saudis in general are contented and without ambition to reform society, for after all they can see an ever-increasing prosperity springing up before their eyes and the benefits of the vast oil revenues seem to trickle down through every stratum of society. The solvent for such a form of society would clearly be the growth of a prosperous talented middle class greedy for greater power, but as such a class barely exists and is drawn entirely from outside Saudi Arabia it is unlikely to be of much significance for some time to come.

14. One of the aspects of modernism of which the Saudis are most proud is the growth of the Saudi army and air force, the training of both of which the Americans have recently undertaken with the object of producing a small but compact force in four years. This force, whether designedly or not, may well have an effect upon the small States of the Persian Gulf littoral detrimental to our interests there, and all the more so since its headquarters are to be at Al Kharj near the east coast where a training centre and aerodrome is now being planned. The Saudi Arabian Air Line, largely staffed and run by Americans, was reinforced this summer by four Skymasters. This so emboldened the Saudi authorities that they cancelled the *ad referendum* agreements which they had with the various companies engaged in pilgrimage flying and demanded a half-share in the traffic on all routes. However, the original arrangements were largely carried out since the Saudis found themselves totally unable to cope with the share they had demanded.

15. The money for all these new developments comes of course from the Arabian-American Oil Company, whose payments to the Saudi Arabian Government in 1952 are estimated at United States \$180 million. Production of oil in 1952 was in the neighbourhood of 41 million metric tons, which represents an increase of approximately 6 per cent. on the previous year. New exploration has been proceeding vigorously, including a good deal in the Rub al Khali and it seems likely that the company has found considerable oil resources which it is not yet prepared to exploit. The Aramco has recently completed at Jedda a storage plant with a capacity of 7 million gallons for the purpose of supplying the growing needs of the Hejaz.

16. The Aramco's relations with the Saudi Arabian Government, though causing the company a good deal of anxiety (they have admitted that they do not expect ever to be free of negotiations), have continued to be satisfactory. In the spring there were long-drawn-out negotiations in which the company conceded several Saudi demands while attempting to evade others, notably those which might seriously prejudice the position of other oil companies in the Middle East. Rather surprisingly negotiations have not yet been resumed and both sides seem content at present to let sleeping dogs lie. The Saudi Government, who now seem to be convinced that they have squeezed Aramco near to the economic

limit, may have been influenced in their attitude by the common sense of McNaughten, the independent American oil expert, whom they brought in as an adviser.

17. The third Saudi budget which was issued in April under the guidance of Nejib Bey Salha, whose continued illness in Beirut is a sad loss to the efficiency of the Ministry of Finance, is a considerably more realistic document than its predecessors and even admits the probability of a small deficit. It claimed the title of "a construction and development budget" and though the Royal family has been allotted over a fifth and will probably spend at least a quarter of the total revenue it does make provision for greatly increased expenditure on public works, defence and health. The Saudi Arabian Government remains, however, without any reserve fund save for what might in time of emergency be squeezed out of the Aramco.

18. Much of the development envisaged in the budget is to be carried out with the advice of the T.C.A. and F.A.O. missions in Saudi Arabia. So far there has been little visible result from this advice save for the work of Dr. Young, the American Financial Adviser, and the new customs tariff, but the members of these missions seem for the most part to be of a fairly high calibre and though often disillusioned they still expect to achieve considerable results. Two projects which are being actively considered at present are the continuation of the Dammam-Riyadh Railway to Jedda and the reorganisation of the administration of the ports.

19. In the economic sphere the most notable internal event in 1952 has been the establishment of the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency which is designed as a State bank and a currency control. It is a monument to Dr. Young, whose sincerity so impressed the Saudis that he was to a large extent allowed to have his own way. The first governor of the agency is an American, Mr. Blowers, who is allowed a remarkably free hand with the result that this innovation seems to be fulfilling its purpose. The new Saudi sovereign though at present at a small discount with the British sovereign appears to be making its way.

20. By comparison with the huge revenues being derived from oil the pilgrimage, until recently the main source of Saudi revenue, has now become rather a sideline, even in Jedda. Nevertheless, the pilgrimage is a matter close to the heart of the

King and his prestige was no doubt greatly enhanced in the Moslem world when he announced at the beginning of Ramadhan that the Government portion of the pilgrimage dues was abolished. This at last revealed how large a share of the dues had previously gone to the Government and there was a rush of Moslems who now found their resources sufficient to carry them to the Holy Land. Pilgrims from abroad numbered over 140,000, by far the

largest number recorded since the war. It is estimated that the pilgrimage brought £15 million to Saudi Arabia, £13 million of which came from the sterling area. Some of these revenues were spent on improving the conditions of the pilgrimage and it is probable that in 1952, for the first time for centuries, the pilgrims had a better than ever chance of receiving reasonable treatment.

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No. 20

FRONTIER DISPUTE: NOTES FROM HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT CONTAINING RENEWED OFFER OF ARBITRATION

Mr. Pelham to Mr. Eden

(No. 5. Confidential)
Sir,

Jedda,
January 5, 1953.

With reference to your telegram No. 10 of January 3 instructing me to deliver to the Saudi Arabian Government two Notes relating to the frontier dispute and containing a renewed offer of arbitration, I have the honour to enclose herein the text of the two notes verbale together with the text of your cordial message to King Ibn Saud which you instructed me to send and which I shall deliver together with the Notes.

2. I am taking the opportunity of a bag just closing to send these texts. The delivery of these documents will be reported by telegram.

3. I am sending copies of this despatch to Bahrain, B.M.E.O. (Fayid) and to Washington.

I have, &c.

G. C. PELHAM.

Note Verbale

Jedda,
January 5, 1953.

Her Majesty's Embassy at Jedda present their compliments to the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and have the honour to acknowledge receipt of their Note of 6th December and its two accompanying messages in which the Saudi Arabian Government expressed their views on the proposals made in Her Majesty's Ambassador's Note of 22nd November that the

disagreement over the boundaries of Saudi Arabia should be submitted to impartial arbitration.

2. Her Majesty's Government note with great satisfaction the friendly reference in paragraph 2 of the Saudi Arabian Government's Note and reaffirm their own sincere wish to solve the present dispute in a peaceful and equitable manner which will permit, on a basis of equality and mutual respect, the continuation and expansion of the friendship between the two countries which dates from the early years of His Majesty's reign.

3. Her Majesty's Government understand from the Note under reference that the Saudi Arabian Government maintain that the area of Buraimi and its vicinity is a part of the Saudi Arabian Kingdom and that they claim therefore that a fundamental distinction exists between the problem in that area and that of the frontiers between Saudi Arabia and certain Persian Gulf Sheikdoms. The Saudi Arabian Government suggested that a tripartite commission should be despatched to the oasis to conduct a plebiscite and that once a decision on sovereignty has been reached by this means, negotiations on the remaining area of the dispute should be resumed.

4. Her Majesty's Government have carefully studied these proposals in a conciliatory spirit. They cannot agree that the problem of Buraimi should be considered in isolation as it is manifestly an integral and inseparable part of the problem of Saudi

Arabian boundaries. Nor do they consider that a plebiscite in the light of recent events would be appropriate or would lead to a solution which takes all relevant factors into account. Although the Saudi Arabian Government may claim Buraimi as a part of Saudi Arabia they cannot ignore that counter-claims are made by the Sheikh of Abu Dhabi and by the Sultan of Muscat, and that these claims have historical justification. Furthermore, the Saudi Arabian Government have clearly recognised that the Buraimi area is in dispute and have agreed in Article 3 (c) of the Standstill Agreement of 26th October to avoid any movement prejudicial to a final decision on its sovereignty, and earlier in their Note of 7th February, 1951, they placed Buraimi within the territory to be examined by a Mixed Commission. Her Majesty's Government are therefore unable to understand why a separate solution for this particular area should now be proposed, and why the Saudi Arabian Government are unwilling to consider the possibility of arbitration for Buraimi whilst apparently seeing the value of this method for the solution of the differences of the remaining parts of the frontier. In view of their wide differences of opinion on these questions Her Majesty's Government are convinced that a continuation of direct negotiations with the Saudi Arabian Government is unlikely to resolve the present dispute.

5. Her Majesty's Government therefore renew their offer made in Her Majesty's Ambassador's Note of 22nd November to submit the present dispute as a whole to arbitration. They are confident that on further examination the Saudi Arabian Government will see the merits of this method which is recognised as equitable by international opinion and which is in Her Majesty's Government's view calculated to satisfy the legitimate claims of all concerned.

6. Her Majesty's Embassy take this opportunity of renewing to the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Foreign Affairs the assurance of their highest consideration.

Note Verbale

Jedda,

January 5, 1953.

Her Majesty's Embassy at Jedda present their compliments to the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of a message from the Saudi Arabian Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs (by Command

of His Majesty King Abdul Aziz) which was handed to Her Majesty's Ambassador, Jedda, on 8th December in reply to Mr. Eden's message of 29th November, concerning the alleged breach of the standstill agreement.

2. Her Majesty's Government wish to emphasise that they attach great importance to the standstill agreement concluded with the Saudi Arabian Government on 26th October. The accepted purpose of this agreement was to permit life at Buraimi to be restored to its normal course after a new element had been introduced into the situation there by the arrival of Turki bin Ataishan.

3. Her Majesty's Government regret that the proper fulfilment of this agreement has been greatly hampered by the activities of Turki bin Ataishan, which, according to reliable evidence, have contravened Article 3 (c), Article 3 (e) and Article 3 (f) of the Agreement. In addition to the instances already notified to the Saudi Arabian Government, Her Majesty's Government have learned that on 8th December Turki made a determined effort to influence the traditional allegiance of Saqr at Buraimi by sending certain Sheikhs to him and by offering substantial presents in order to influence his decision. Her Majesty's Government cannot believe that the Saudi Arabian Government approve of such action by their representative and maintain the view that Turki has acted in contravention of the letter and spirit of the agreement.

4. Her Majesty's Government note that the Saudi Arabian Government have made allegations against the British Political Officer. Her Majesty's Government would point out, however, that British Political Officers have visited Buraimi on numerous occasions during the last half century, and particularly during the last ten years. Such visits were regarded by all concerned as normal and legitimate. It is only very recently, during 1952, that the Saudi Arabian Government have come to take a contrary view. Her Majesty's Government therefore regret that they cannot entertain complaints against Mr. Weir, particularly in the light of present circumstances and Turki's activities.

5. Her Majesty's Government are anxious to proceed to a fair and equitable solution of the frontier dispute, of which Buraimi oasis is an integral part. They are accordingly renewing to the Saudi Arabian Government their offer to submit the whole dispute to arbitration. If, however, the

Saudi Arabian Government consider it would help towards an immediate and proper execution of the standstill agreement they are ready to authorise Her Majesty's Ambassador, Jedda, to consult with the Saudi Arabian Government in accordance with paragraph 3 (f) of the Agreement, provided that not only Mr. Weir's visits to Buraimi but also the activities initiated by the Saudi Arabian representative, Turki, will be under review.

6. Her Majesty's Embassy at Jedda take this opportunity of renewing to the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Foreign Affairs the assurance of their highest consideration.

MESSAGE from Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to His Majesty King Abdul Aziz delivered by Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Saudi Arabian Ministry for Foreign Affairs on the 5th January 1953 (conforming to the 18th Rabi'a Thani 1372).

Mr. Eden has instructed Her Majesty's Ambassador to transmit to Your Majesty the following message:—

I present my cordial greetings to Your Majesty.

In the message which Your Majesty commanded the Saudi Arabian Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs to transmit to me on the 6th December, 1952, I was most happy to observe the emphasis which Your Majesty laid upon the necessity incumbent upon our two countries to find

a practical method of solving our present dispute. This as Your Majesty is aware has always been the desire of Her Majesty's Government who have long been perturbed at the strain which the frontier dispute has put upon the traditional friendship between our two countries.

The essence of a practical and friendly solution is that it should be impartial and all-embracing and that it should leave no possibility of recrimination. This is in accordance with the views which Your Majesty expressed to Her Majesty's Ambassador on the 26th October, 1952, conforming to the 6th Safar 1372 when Your Majesty spoke of your earnest desire to reach a solution in a completely just and impartial manner. Your Majesty then said that it was natural when friends disagreed to ask for purely impartial help in reaching a just and amicable settlement.

I can assure Your Majesty that it is precisely because I am imbued with the same sentiments that I have instructed Her Majesty's Ambassador to renew in a note verbale which he will address to Your Majesty's Government the offer of arbitration contained in his Note No. 334 of the 22nd November, 1952.

I feel sure that Your Majesty will appreciate my sincerity and that Your Majesty will realise how exactly the method of arbitration which takes impartial account of all relevant considerations and accords with established international practice fulfils Your Majesty's expressed desire for a practical and equitable settlement.

P 10154/IG

No. 21

**FRONTIER DISPUTE: ABUSE OF THE STAND-STILL AGREEMENT
BY THE SAUDIS**

Foreign Office,

(No. 6. Intel. Secret) *January 8, 1953.*

My Intel No. 224.

Since conclusion of the Buraimi Standstill Agreement on the 26th October it has become apparent that Saudis intend only to take advantage of situation to continue propaganda activities in disputed area. Disregarding terms of agreement, their representative is, by bribery and intimidation, tampering with traditional allegiance,

not only of Muscat tribes, but of tribes indisputably belonging to Rulers of Trucial Sheikdoms. Protests to Saudi Government have been of no avail.

2. At the same time as Standstill Agreement was signed Saudis offered to settle the dispute by:—

(a) a plebiscite in Buraimi oasis under supervision of a Tripartite Commission (United Kingdom, United States and Saudi);

(b) direct negotiations on other disputed areas preceded by a fact-finding commission.

These proposals were clearly designed to confirm a situation which Saudis had falsely and improperly created. Furthermore, our experience has shown that direct negotiations with the Saudis, without some element of compulsion, are unlikely to produce reasonable settlement.

3. Her Majesty's Government accordingly decided to invite Saudis to agree to an impartial arbitration of the whole dispute. The offer was made on 22nd November with concurrence of Sheikh of Abu Dhabi, the principal Trucial Ruler concerned, and with reluctant agreement of Sultan of Muscat.

4. There is evidence that this very fair offer put Saudis in some difficulty. They replied on the 8th December, renewing previous proposals, but showing some willingness to consider arbitration on points of difference in areas other than Buraimi. Buraimi was claimed to be beyond scope of arbitration being, it was alleged, indisputably part of Saudi Arabia. The Saudi reply amounted, however, to rejection of our offer. Furthermore, language used by Saudi Government in their recent communications to Her Majesty's Embassy suggests that their claims may continue to advance and there have been signs of Ibn Saud wishing to claim the allegiance of "all the people of Oman." They are, no doubt, encouraged by the comparative success of their Buraimi venture and there is some evidence that they contemplate further incursions into the disputed areas. Meanwhile their subversive activities in the disputed areas continue.

5. In the light of these developments Her Majesty's Government have decided:—

- (a) to renew offer of arbitration to Saudis. This is desirable for tactical reasons, apart from the intrinsic merits of the proposal;
- (b) to give material support to our Rulers by the despatch of a limited number of armoured cars and aircraft to the Trucial coast;

(c) to build up the Trucial Oman Levies sufficiently to withstand Saudi infiltration and maintain our position in the long term.

6. The factors which have influenced Her Majesty's Government's decision are as follows:—

- (a) Her Majesty's Government are convinced that Ibn Saud will push forward until faced with some resistance. Turki's success at Buraimi may well tempt the Saudis to repeat the stroke elsewhere in the Trucial Coast. There are in fact already signs of this;
- (b) at present there are no forces in the Trucial Sheikhdoms capable of checking at the outset any new Saudi forward move. If they repeat elsewhere their success at Buraimi our position would be seriously damaged and the loss of British protected territory would be laid at our door;
- (c) the small forces in question will stiffen the local administrations and act as a reserve of strength against any new Saudi push. At the same time they will encourage those loyal to the Rulers for whose protection we are responsible and serve as a deterrent to further defections.
- (d) Her Majesty's Government have no intention whatever of taking hostile action against the Saudis. They must, however, put themselves in a position to resist further encroachment by them. They will strive to avoid any suggestion of provocation.

7. The renewed offer of arbitration was made on the 5th January. American support for arbitration has been obtained and both the United States Secretary of State and the United States Ambassador in Jeddah have urged this course upon the Saudis.

8. Above is for your background information only. Separate guidance on publicity will follow.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SAUDI ARMED FORCES.

Mr. Pelham to Mr. Eden. (Received January 21)

(No. 12. Confidential) Jeddah,
Sir, January 14, 1953.

In paragraphs 11, 12 and 13 of my despatch No. 133 of the 19th November, I described how an increasing proportion of Saudi wealth is being expended upon the production of force. I now have the honour to report on further recent manifestations of the growth of Saudi Arabian thought regarding military power.

2. In the past week the local press has several times reported in full the text of a speech by the Amir Mashaal, the Minister for Defence and Aviation, which was read by General Tassan to the mission of eighty-one military students which the Saudi Arabian Government has just sent to Egypt, where, according to the local press, they received a warm welcome from various notables including General Neguib. It is said that these students are to go to various schools, both civil and military, where they are to learn a variety of subjects including, apparently, law and commerce. The main contingent, however, will probably go to the military college.

3. The choice of Egypt for the training of her students is natural and traditional to Saudi Arabia, but no doubt the prestige of General Neguib's Army now makes it more attractive. Events in Egypt are reported with little comment in the local press, but the general impression seems to be that Egypt is now showing the world that Arabs are vigorous, proud and independent. The Egyptian influence in this country has recently received an accession of strength through the introduction of several Egyptian officers into the Public Security Department. Syria also is looked upon with approval and the discipline and power for which Colonel Shishakly calls seem to strike a sympathetic chord in the minds of several of the more ambitious Saudi leaders. There are, of course, several Syrians in influential positions in the Saudi Arabian Government.

4. It is at least partly the example of other Arab States which has stirred Saudi Arabia into such activity and pride in the building up of her Army. It is no doubt partly also in a spirit of emulation that the Saudi Government has recently shown so

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much interest in the creation of an Air Force. As I reported in paragraph 9 of my despatch No. 142 of the 26th November, it was the great military review and fly-past at Riyadh on the 22nd October which excited the authorities to open a Saudi Air Force Fund which the King began with a contribution of 1 million Saudi riyals. This week the official gazette published the contribution list with "pride and glory in those contributors whose action is a display of their religious zeal, Arab gallantry and national munificence in this noble cause." The total contributions so far, excluding the enormous sums given by the Royal family, amount to approximately £54,450. It is interesting to observe that Yusuf Yasin contributed 20,000 Saudi riyals, Khalid al Qarqani 10,000, Bashir Sadawi 5,000 and Jamal Husseimi 4,000. There were many contributors some of who afforded no more than 5 Saudi riyals which may perhaps indicate that even the humbler folk in Riyadh contributed. There appears to have been no equivalent excitement in the Hejaz and the fund is almost totally subscribed by persons connected with Riyadh.

5. This distribution of subscribers certainly reflects accurately the location of the inspiration and influence which is pushing ahead the development of the armed forces at a considerable pace. The King himself finds this facet of government thoroughly congenial and moreover it ministers to his vanity. To some of his nationalistic advisers the armed forces may appear to be the very instrument of policy for which they have so long wished. To the younger notables there is opportunity for glorious and honourable though not too arduous employment. To all—and perhaps not even the Jeddah merchants are untouched by this—there is the traditional Arab pride in strength and feats of arms. The recent anniversary of the King's accession has provided an opportunity for much adulation and nearly all of it has emphasised the new found strength of Saudi Arabia and the Arabs under the leadership of Ibn Saud.

6. In the past few months there have been several appeals to the youth of Saudi Arabia to join the armed forces. Almost daily contingents of the Saudi Army drill

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in the centre of Jedda and any excuse for a parade is eagerly seized. This week a new military school was opened at Riyadh. Others are to be situated in the Abha province and at Taif. The students are to be entirely supported by the Saudi Government. This summer the Crown Prince opened a modern military hospital in Taif where there is already a well-equipped Officers' Club.

7. In my despatch No. 133 of the 19th November I suggested that the growth of Saudi military strength was likely to have an effect upon our influence in Saudi Arabia and our position in the Persian Gulf States. While I do not think that Ibn Saud began to increase his military strength with this specific end in view, yet it seems to me certain that he and his advisers are ambitious for the aggrandisement of the country. This feeling in Riyadh is part of

the general feeling of nationalism stirring in the Arab world which hopes to overthrow the position of the West with the weapons of the West while still retaining the Islamic fervour and pride of the Arabs. The general trend of events is towards making Saudi Arabia a more difficult country with which to deal. What is required is a policy which combines strength—the argument which most appeals to Saudi Arabia in her present frame of mind—with a respect for natural and inherent prejudices. The Middle East Defence Organisation may perhaps eventually prove to be the way in which to establish a sound position for Britain in the Middle East.

8. I am sending copies of this despatch to Cairo, Washington, Bahrein and B.M.E.O. (Fayid).

I have, &c.

G. C. PELHAM.

ES 1781/4

No. 23

ANNUAL REPORT ON THE PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY PLACES IN THE HEJAZ FOR 1952

Mr. Pelham to Mr. Eden. (Received 19th February)

(No. 21. Confidential) *Jedda,*
Sir, *2nd February, 1953*

I have the honour to transmit herewith my annual report on the pilgrimage to the holy places in the Hejaz for 1952 (corresponding to the year 1371 in the Moslem calendar). I am indebted to my Oriental Secretary, Mr. Thomson, for its preparation.

2. I am sending a copy of this despatch with its enclosure to the Head of the British Middle East Office at Fayid only. I shall be grateful if, as in previous years, you will arrange for any further distribution of the report which you may consider desirable.

I have, &c.

G. C. PELHAM.

Enclosure in No. 23

Pilgrimage Report for 1952

The pilgrimage of 1952 (corresponding to the year 1371 in the Moslem calendar)

was in many ways remarkable and may well earn a respected place in the annals of this uniquely curious event. The gathering of the pilgrims had actually begun when King Ibn Saud suddenly declared that he would no longer levy the customary dues upon them. With the unexpectedly large influx of foreign pilgrims which followed it is all more remarkable that the Saudi authorities with the Crown Prince at their head showed a refreshingly determined disposition to take control of the pilgrimage, to organise it and to make pilgrim welfare their primary consideration.

2. It took four months to disperse the survivors of the pilgrimage of 1951. The holocaust on that occasion by the Arabian sun, Lawrence's "drawn sword" which struck men "speechless," killed several thousand pilgrims and the King himself was only saved by being packed in ice. This catastrophe did nothing to damp the ardour of the pious this year; but it did cause some of the more thoughtful foreign Moslems and

the Saudi authorities themselves to recognise the need for improving the facilities available to pilgrims.

3. At the beginning of the year there was little sign that the approaching pilgrimage was to be in any way remarkable. It was observed that the new quarantine complex which would allow the Kamaran quarantine station to be shut down was unlikely to be ready despite all assurances to the contrary. Various other projects for improving the pilgrimage facilities were much discussed but little acted upon. Most observers were, however, surprised to notice that the pilgrim village being constructed at the landward end of the road to Jedda pier was progressing swiftly.

4. The Moslem missions in Jedda were gloomy as to the probable fate of their pilgrims in 1952, and the entire diplomatic community received with dire suspicion an official Saudi proposal that all pilgrims should pay an additional sum, probably £20, in exchange for which they would receive free tent accommodation and food at Arafat and Mina and certain other facilities. This arrangement was already in force for some of the Far Eastern pilgrims, amongst them the Malaysians, and had proved reasonably satisfactory. It was, however, widely felt that the Saudis would be unable to provide the facilities they promised to more than a small proportion of the pilgrims, and that unless a close supervision were maintained the gates of extortion would be opened wider to the mutawwifs (pilgrim guides). In the event the royal decree altering the pilgrimage tariff made such a scheme impossible, but it seems probable that it was already dead, killed by the hostility of the diplomatic corps.

5. The pilgrimage tariff issued in March was identical with that of 1951 in all its main provisions save for an additional charge of £1 levied on all pilgrims as a flat rate for accommodation in the new pilgrim village at Jedda. This caused no serious difficulties and the pilgrimage season began smoothly enough on 27th March. A number of pilgrims arrived early in time to gain the extra merit of spending Ramadhan in the Hejaz. Amongst them were a number of West Africans (mainly from Nigeria and Dahomey) who had trekked across Africa and then been smuggled into Saudi Arabia by dhows running on to deserted beaches at night. This illicit traffic annoyed the Saudi authorities who tended not to appreciate the extraordinary difficulties facing the Sudan Government and the energetic steps they were taking towards the suppression of the

trade. This embassy warned the Saudi authorities that nothing save a drastic reduction in the pilgrimage tariff would suffice to stop the rapidly increasing trade. The event proved us right, for with the abolition of the Government portion of the pilgrimage dues there were fewer cases of smuggling and the traffic may well eventually disappear altogether.

6. It was in mid-May, just before the beginning of Ramadhan, that to everyone's surprise King Ibn Saud suddenly issued his decree of abolition. Long ago he had said he would do this were he ever to become rich, but few had actually expected anything of the sort. Recently, however, the tariff had come under renewed adverse criticism in Syria and Egypt and this had apparently touched to the quick the King's pride as self-styled father of the Arabs and protector of Islam. Thus with a single grand gesture he renounced a revenue of about £3 million a year.

7. The first result was confusion. At the beginning of Ramadhan the Government offices virtually ceased to function for two or three days, but in any case no official in Jedda had been given any intimation as to precisely what had been altered and what remained unchanged. It soon became clear indeed from the number of contradictory statements being made by prominent officials that not all the implications of the royal decree had been considered even in Riyadh. The only alteration in fact was a reduction in the basic tariff paid by all pilgrims from £28 to £8 10s.; it thus being revealed that the latter sum was the share of the mutawwifs and their agents while the Saudi Government had previously claimed £19 10s. Certain Far Eastern pilgrims who had previously paid £48 now get the same services for £23 10s. while all pilgrims continued to pay, in the first instance to the transport company which brought them to the Hejaz, the sum of £6 6s. which comprised quarantine fees and the cost of transport and accommodation in Jedda. In brief the Saudi Government withdrew altogether from the pilgrimage trade and merely intervened to decree that the maximum *basic* fee which a mutawwif might charge a pilgrim was £8 10s.

8. The problem of refunding dues to pilgrims who had already paid at the old rate was, with the co-operation of the pilgrims' home Governments, resolved satisfactorily. The result was that many pilgrims had more cash to spend in the Hejaz than they had foreseen. It had been expected that the 1952 foreign pilgrimage like that of the previous

year would number about 100,000. In fact the reduction of dues stimulated those who had been saving up for the great occasion to make the journey to Mecca immediately with the consequence that about 140,000 actually came from abroad. Saudi Arabia as a whole benefited since it is estimated that the pilgrimage brought about £14 million into the country in 1952 as against approximately £10 million in the previous year. Of the total of £14 million, approximately £12 came from the sterling area. This sudden increase in the number of foreign pilgrims is unlikely to have been a flash in the pan which exhausted the reserves of fresh pilgrims. The number of Moslems anxious to make the pilgrimage seems almost limitless (many come more than once) and now that the financial barrier has been so considerably reduced the chief limiting factor is likely to be the amount of shipping available.

9. Approximately 111,000 persons or about 77 per cent. of the total foreign pilgrimage arrived at Jedda by sea. At the time of the pilgrimage itself there were more than twenty ships in the anchorage. The shipping arrangements were on the whole an improvement over those of the previous year. There was a more general realisation of the need for a quick turn round and that the critical factor in determining the number of pilgrims to be brought was not the carrying of them to the Hejaz but the shipping space available to carry them away within the six weeks or so succeeding the Haj. Aware of this, several Governments, notably those of Pakistan, the Federation of Malaya and Indonesia, restricted the number of pilgrims allowed to travel to the Hejaz. After their experience of the previous year with 32,000 pilgrims, the Pakistan Legation here insisted that there must be fewer pilgrims or more ships. Only six ships were again provided so that only 19,800 Pakistan pilgrims were allowed to come. Largely owing to a new agreement between the Sudan Government and the Halal Shipping Company this embassy was involved in much less trouble over shipping than usual. The agreement provided for a shuttle service (which, however, the company did not fully maintain on the return trip) to run between Suakin, the Sudan quarantine port, and Jedda until all pilgrims had been brought to the Hejaz. With a considerable effort this was achieved just in time despite the fact that the Sudan pilgrimage was more than twice as large as had been anticipated. The Blue Funnel Line carrying Malayan pilgrims functioned with their customary efficiency and earned much kudos.

10. The story of how some 26,000 pilgrims arrived by air is more eventful but less orderly. The original arrangements based on *ad referendum* agreements with the Saudi Government worked smoothly until the middle of July when the Saudis demanded a half share in all pilgrimage traffic. This caused a good deal of annoyance and confusion but eventually nearly all airlines were forced to acquiesce in the demand which was the more palatable though none the less aggravating because it was generally recognised that the Saudis would be unable to carry the share of the traffic they had demanded. Such indeed proved to be the case and the foreign airlines found themselves with as many passengers as they could wish for and sometimes more.

11. The Saudi Arabian Airline's arrangements were chaotic and caused much trouble both to this embassy and to the foreign airlines. They started their airlift too late: even on 1st August they were still without a fixed schedule. In these circumstances it is much to the credit of their American pilots and airport staff that they are said to have carried 9,000 pilgrims on both the inward and the outward journeys. They were saved only by chartering several planes at the last moment. Apparently they had not reckoned with the considerable air traffic within the country. Arabian American Oil Company aircraft chartered by the Saudi Airlines flew a shuttle service to Medina bringing back the many thousands of pilgrims who had elected to go to that city first.

12. At one time the Shell and Socony agents in Jedda were seriously worried lest they should have insufficient stocks of aviation fuel. All the fuel is provided by the Arabian American Oil Company, though it does not necessarily come from Dammam, and goes in the first place to Socony who pass some of it on to Shell. On the basis of a generous increase in the 1951 figures Socony and Shell had estimated that they would require 300,000 imperial gallons in August: in fact this amount was used in the last week alone and the two companies delivered no less than 651,000 imperial gallons during the month. Fortunately, however, their reserves were just sufficient and never ran out.

13. Undoubtedly the most dramatic and best publicised event in the gathering together of the faithful was the American airlift in the last four days of the pilgrimage. Owing chiefly to quarrels between the Saudi

Airlines and certain foreign companies, about 4,000 Turkish and Persian pilgrims found themselves stranded in Beirut with not means of getting to Mecca in time for the pilgrimage. The Lebanese Government appealed for assistance both to Britain and America. The Americans were able to provide fourteen military air transport planes drawn from North Africa and Germany. By special order of the Crown Prince the deadline for pilgrims arriving by air at Jedda was extended from 27th August to noon on the 29th, Arafat day itself. Flying almost non-stop the American C-54s carried the stranded pilgrims to Jedda in seventy-four return trips. The last plane beat the deadline by thirty-eight minutes.

14. Amongst the pilgrims carried by the Americans was Kashani, the President of the Iranian Majlis. (He was received at Jedda airport by the Iranian Minister wearing blue braces.) A photograph of Kashani boarding a plane appears in the excellently illustrated booklet published by the Americans in both English and Arabic to record their achievement. And indeed to anyone who witnessed the scenes of confusion and despair at Beirut and of confusion and joy at Jedda, it was no small achievement, and added much to American prestige.

15. The greatest blessing of this pilgrimage was the absence of disease. Had an epidemic occurred it would have wrought havoc amongst the crowded stinking mass of humanity. To control it would have been a herculean task. It may have been for this reason that the Saudi had made no adequate preparations to meet such an onslaught. The new quarantine complex outside Jedda is well planned and, if adequately staffed, may be able to cope with future emergencies, but at the time of this pilgrimage it was only half finished and was without water, drainage or electric light.

16. Of the 795 deaths which occurred during the four days of the pilgrimage itself nearly all were due to senility and the heat. The Turks in particular suffered heavily and are said to have lost about a third of their number. This was due to the unaccustomed heat, to the high proportion of old people and to the fact that the Turkish pilgrimage having been virtually suspended for some years they lacked the accumulated experience of other nationalities. Of the 5,500 or so Malayan pilgrims approximately 300 died. Very roughly this seems to have been the percentage death rate for most nationalities, and most observers were agreed that it was comparatively low. It would

undoubtedly have been considerably higher had not several Governments sent medical missions or first aid groups with their pilgrims. The Saudis seem to be genuinely aware of the necessity for providing medical attention, and have in fact recently improved their facilities. This pilgrimage 250 new ice-water baths proved to be of great value. The hospital at Mecca is being rebuilt and extended, and it is said that it will be air-conditioned. Despite this progress the Moslem missions in Jedda are deeply distrustful (for good reason) of the Saudi medical arrangements, and they have therefore urged upon their Governments the policy which cannot be too much encouraged of sending their own medical mission to look after their own pilgrims. Pakistan already maintains permanent medical stations at Jedda, Mecca and Medina: Egypt at Mecca and Medina and India and Indonesia at Mecca.

17. A further sphere in which improvement was notable (though some progress had previously been made) was in the control of pilgrims. The pier and reception arrangements were excellent. Pilgrims and their luggage were passed from their ships through the various formalities to the care of their respective mutawwifs with remarkably little delay. Best of all, however, was the speed with which they were transported from Jedda to Mecca. It must be admitted, however, that the smoothness with which the whole movement proceeded was due as much to the restraint of Saudi officials in allowing affairs to take their own course as to any more positive virtues. Some went almost straight from the ship to the holy city, others went first to the pilgrim village, but normally were moved through it expeditiously, rarely remaining there more than three days. The village in fact proved to be a great success. Its only serious fault was that it was much too small, but it is now being extended for the 1953 pilgrimage. The camp is said to have been designed for 3,500 pilgrims and it is a measure of progress that on this basis one latrine was provided for approximately every twenty-two pilgrims. It is certain, however, that the camp was frequently overcrowded; the highest estimate is that at times it contained 10,000 pilgrims. The surplus sprawled untidily here and there, in half-built houses, on roofs, on the mud flats, in tents and in warehouses. For the most part the pilgrims seemed remarkably patient. The odour which enveloped the village, whether of sanctity or otherwise, was stupefying.

18. It is normally the case that during the pilgrimage prices in the Hejaz rise to phenomenal heights and this, particularly after the pilgrimage, causes much suffering amongst the poorer pilgrims. This year was not a complete exception, yet it certainly seems to have been true that the prices of the staple goods at least rose to an unexpectedly small degree. There was of course fluctuations and even the price of locally-produced coco-cola rose by over 40 per cent. Nevertheless in general it seems that the pilgrims escaped the major extortions which were inescapable before the discovery of oil. Prices tended to rise more in Mecca than in Jeddah and the merchants in both cities expressed themselves as well satisfied with the trade they had done.

19. The transport of pilgrims during the pilgrimage itself broke down rather seriously (this has since led to the cancellation of the Arab Car Company's monopoly of pilgrimage transport). The pilgrimage tariff lays down rates for the various classes of transport, but it seems that some unscrupulous persons were unable to resist the temptation presented by the gullibility and piety of the pilgrims. Whereas the rate for a native travelling from Mecca to Medina and back to Jeddah was 50 Saudi riyals, that for a pilgrim was 112. Despite all this pilgrims were moved with reasonable despatch along the excellent road between Jeddah and Mecca. Between Jeddah and Medina the road, which is now used by all pilgrims travelling by land, has been partly macadamised, but the remaining and much longer portion is still in a miserable condition and the going is bad. Some of the Malayan pilgrims actually paid baksheesh in the hope of persuading their drivers to be careful. Since the Saudi Government has wisely prohibited mid-day travel it is still a two-day journey from Jeddah to Medina.

20. As not infrequently happens, there was some doubt as to which would be Arafat day. It was finally resolved in favour of 29th August, a Friday, which thus made the 1952 pilgrimage even more of a gala occasion. An official announcement declared that altogether there were 350,000 pilgrims at Arafat; if this figure is approximately accurate it would imply that there were about 200,000 pilgrims from within Saudi Arabia. The various communities apparently kept very much to themselves and many of them according to their own account stayed all day long in their tents. (All that is necessary to acquire merit is to be present upon the plain of Arafat at the

right time.) The water supply was adequate, but only barely so. Except for the Malayans who had been trained during the voyage to the Hejaz no one dreamt of queuing, but there was surprisingly little acrimony. The Crown Prince, who was leading the pilgrimage in his father's place, behaved like a private pilgrim, but unlike his father apparently did not mix freely with the other pilgrims. However he was by no means deficient in a sense of duty as he proved that night.

21. Soon after sunset the helter-skelter from Arafat to Muzdalifa ensued and confusion was general. All observers agreed that the quickest means of getting from one point to the other was by walking, but very large numbers of people encumbered with baggage went by bus and car. The unwary got stuck in the sand and could rarely find anyone to stop and help them, though in fact there were cranes available. The rest found themselves packed in an interminable traffic jam in which such priority as there was was given to princes. The Crown Prince, the Amir Feisal and the Amir Abdulla Feisal all did notable work in personally directing the traffic. There was insufficient transport which meant that buses had to make several trips, and this they had great difficulty in doing with the result that many pilgrims were still at Arafat when dawn broke. The Crown Prince himself twice returned to Arafat to round up the stragglers. He used soldiers to control the traffic and thus secured some order but as soon as he left chaos reigned again.

22. At Muna the Crown Prince received all the notables who had come on the pilgrimage, including, amongst others, a contingent from the two Pakistani destroyers which were at that time visiting Jeddah. Other prominent pilgrims present were the Sultan of Bir Ali in the Aden Protectorate; the ex-Sultan of Lahej; the Amir Seif Ul Islam Abdulla, the Yemeni Minister for Foreign Affairs; Haj Amin Al Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Palestine; Dr. Hatta, the Vice-President of Indonesia; Sayed Abdur Rab Nishitar, the Pakistan Minister for Industries; the Sultan of Selangor; members of the ruling family of Qatar; the Sheikh of Dubai; Chief Abu Khan of the Gambia Protectorate; the Sultan of Hadeija in Nigeria, and, of course, Kashani. It is believed that there were a few Moslems from behind the Iron Curtain, but if so they did not take a prominent part in the pilgrimage. The official statistics showing the number of pilgrims attending from each country are not worth forwarding

this year since in every case where accurate information is available to us the official figures are proved to be considerably in error.

23. A large part of the Saudi army paraded at Muna and the march past is said to have taken two hours. The Pakistanis on their own admission took the opportunity of spreading propaganda of an unspecified sort. Afghan supporters of Pukhtoonistan disseminated a pamphlet attacking Pakistan and criticising Britain. The pilgrims, sustained by an adequate supply of water and improved medical facilities, remained at Muna for three days daily stoning the devils. One over-enthusiastic Indian pilgrim caused trouble when the rubber slipper with which he was chastising a devil unfortunately bounced off and hit another pilgrim in the face. The richer pilgrims with their own transport went to Mecca in the intervals of stone throwing to perform their religious duties there, thus avoiding the crush which came later when the main mass of pilgrims began to move on the city.

24. No sooner is the pilgrimage completed than most of the pilgrims who have looked forward with patience and great fervour to accomplishing their religious duties manifest an urgent desire to escape from this country. Many of them, particularly the well-to-do professional people, express in the liveliest terms their intention never to return. The Saudi Government acted firmly and averted the normal chaos. Their guiding principles were that pilgrims should not come to Jeddah until there was proof that there was transport ready to take them home and that this transport should be ready as soon as possible. A schedule was drawn up and adhered to by which each group of pilgrims whether coming direct from Mecca or via Medina was assigned a priority in accordance with which it arrived in Jeddah and occupied the pilgrim village. The scheme threatened to break down at one point when the shipping companies were not producing their ships as fast as the Saudi authorities had expected. The Crown Prince dealt with the crisis in autocratic fashion. All but three of the shipping companies—

two of these three being British—were fined and several prominent agents were technically imprisoned. This contributed considerably to the easing of the bottleneck. By mid-November the task of dispersing the pilgrims had been completed.

25. The scenes at Jeddah airport were remarkable. Frequently the doors had to be shut to keep out pilgrims trying to storm their way on to aircraft. The prices at the airport buffets, even for water, rose to tremendous heights. The Government had constructed a shelter nearby which was usually crowded to overflowing and it was an impressive sight to see large areas of the runways covered at the time of evening prayers with silent bowing figures. Activity went on non-stop throughout the night and much credit is due to the tireless exertions of agents, pilots and control staff. The airlift was completed by 14th October.

26. The Crown Prince's activity in connexion with the pilgrimage was salutary in several ways. The King had sent him to the Hejaz to superintend the pilgrimage and had told him not to leave until it was completed. This gave the Crown Prince useful experience in administering what was until recently the chief industry of his country. Probably as a result of this his decree reorganising pilgrimage affairs seemed to show a great awareness of actual conditions and possibilities than some of his other enactments. Being ambitious for the title of reformer, the Crown Prince put a lot of energy and drive into the pilgrimage and set a charitable example listening to the complaints of all pilgrims, which he encouraged, and himself relieving the distress of many. This stimulated the zeal of the officials, many of whom had the welfare of the pilgrims genuinely at heart, and it seems probable that a number of the projects for improvements generally agreed to be necessary will actually be carried out shortly. It may well be that in retrospect the pilgrimage of 1952 will prove to have been the turning point at which pilgrims for the first time for centuries had a better than even chance of receiving reasonable treatment.

THE CROWN PRINCE'S TOUR IN THE PROVINCE OF HASA

Mr. Pelham to Mr. Eden. (Received March 11)

(No. 28. Confidential) *Jedda,*
Sir, *March 3, 1953.*

I have the honour to report that the Crown Prince, the Amir Saud, returned to Riyadh on the 20th February after making a tour of some six weeks' duration in the province of Hasa.

2. At the end of his lengthy and eventful stay in Jedda and Mecca, reported in my despatch No. 142 of the 26th November, the Crown Prince progressed in a vast motor caravan to Medina, where he issued his customary series of decrees, theoretically bringing into being new roads, schools and hospitals. He then continued by road to Riyadh where he was received with great *éclat*. Although he had been away in the Hejaz for four months the Crown Prince spent only three weeks in Riyadh and immediately after the celebrations commemorating Ibn Saud's accession to the throne, left for Al Hasa in the second week of January.

3. It is not clear why he left Riyadh so soon or why he chose this moment to visit Al Hasa but, while the weather may have had something to do with it, he no doubt felt that, having demonstrated his authority over the Hejaz, it was time for self-assertion at the main seat of Saudi wealth and power. Al Hasa is probably more sympathetic to the Crown Prince than the Hejaz, for its primitive life is closer to the atmosphere in which he grew up and it is a province which more naturally looks to the house of Saud for its rulers. Once there his manner seemed to become easier, and, while he set himself out for it, popular acclaim appeared to be more spontaneous. In the true Arab tradition he made himself freely accessible to all petitioners and all newspaper accounts stress the way in which he toured the country meeting every sort of person; arriving, for example, to visit a railway construction gang without warning. On this particular occasion he graciously talked to the workers and was answered with a speech of praise and gratitude. There is some reason to suppose that the official accounts of the crowds that flocked to see and vociferously cheer him are not grossly exaggerated. It was reported that while he was in Dhahran he had hundreds of

visitors from Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait and "every part of the Arab peninsula." No doubt cupidity was the chief motive which spurred many of his visitors; nevertheless, it was further proof that the Crown Prince's authority is well grounded and of the predominant position his country occupies in the peninsula of Arabia.

4. Even more significant than the plaudits of the multitude was the presence in Hasa of many of the Chief Saudi officials and notables, that select band which alone possesses influence in the country. The Minister of Finance, Abdulla Suleiman, and nearly important official in his Ministry, was in Hasa at the same time and the magnetism of this double attraction drew, like moths to a light, every great merchant and scheming adventurer. There was, however, no doubt as to the respective positions of the Crown Prince and the Minister of Finance. The latter, it was announced, had gone in front to smooth the way for the former. Apart from Abdulla Suleiman, the only member of the small and faithful circle of advisers close to the King who accompanied the Crown Prince on his tour was Jamal Husseini who, it is thought by some, plans to be even closer to the next king of Saudi Arabia.

5. The Saudi newspapers have been full of the Crown Prince's travels and popularity, the military parades he reviewed, the works he inspected, the pious statements he made, and the dinners he gave and received, yet for all their adulation they printed little that proved the Crown Prince to be a reformer. The Hejazis, who during the summer had become accustomed to great projects and sweeping decrees, began to ask whether Hasa was to be treated with a similar dose. The answer came in a brochure issued by the Crown Prince's Diwan. The layout and production of this brochure is so much above the normal standard of work here that I transmit herewith an original copy.⁽¹⁾ Since the Aramco have not the facilities for such a production it may have been printed in Bahrain.

6. The brochure is in two parts, both typical of the Crown Prince's style and method of doing business. The first is a

⁽¹⁾ Not printed.

speech said to have been delivered by the Crown Prince himself. After thanking God for revealing the true religion, he declares that the love and loyalty manifested by all classes of the nation has induced him to "persevere in our efforts towards the fulfilment of His Majesty's desire to spare nothing whatever in the cause of raising the standard of living of our nation" so that "everyone, high and low, weak and strong," shall enjoy the improvement. He stresses that this is a great work which will take many years and much study. Each must co-operate by fulfilling completely "his national obligations." In return the King and the Crown Prince will administer justice, safeguard the national interests, promote religion and improve the standard of living. With its idea of a divinely sanctioned contractual partnership based upon the nexus of duties and rights appropriate to different stations in life, this is the very theory of mediaeval kingship. It seems not at all incongruous for it suits very well the stage of development which Saudi Arabia has reached.

7. The Crown Prince's speech goes on to welcome as guests Arab and Moslem brethren who are of good character and sincere in their endeavours to promote the welfare of Saudi Arabia. He concludes with a warning against "destructive creeds" and "false propaganda" by which it is fairly clear, though he does not mention names, that he principally intends Communism.

8. The second part of the brochure is given the title: "The first statement of the schemes for reforms in the eastern area set on foot by H.R.H. the Crown Prince." This, too, stresses the Crown Prince's concern for all classes of people and the great work he has undertaken for them in return for their love and loyalty. The Crown Prince's first concern, so it is said, was for religion. He therefore caused some old mosques to be enlarged and a number of new mosques to be built. He increased the judicial staff and established new Shari'a courts. He also raised the salaries of the members of the Society of Virtue and increased their number while giving them further facilities. The Crown Prince has always appeared to appreciate the need for education. He appointed a new deputy director of education, ordered the construction of some new schools in the towns, and, even more significantly, in three cases in the desert. He has asked the Lebanese Government to loan some experts

to advise on the establishment of a Saudi Industrial School, the graduates of which will eventually gain certificates qualifying them to receive the same benefits as those granted to foreign technicians. Aramco are apprehensive about this as they say that they are already giving all possible employment to Saudis.

9. The Crown Prince has also ordered the appointment of a number of other foreign Arab experts. There is to be one Egyptian for economic affairs and another for labour affairs. There is to be at least one expert, a Syrian, for municipal affairs and no fewer than five agricultural advisers. Experts in public security may also be appointed. But something is to be done before they come, for, it is said, the Crown Prince is preparing new police regulations; a deputy director of health has already been appointed to supervise the four new hospitals and the two new dispensaries which the Crown Prince has ordered; a deputy director for posts, telegraphs and telephones has been appointed; the construction or renovation of twenty-three coastguard posts on the Persian Gulf has been decreed; roads are to be improved and a causeway is to be constructed to the island of Tarut; the port at Qatif, though it is only half an hour distant from the adequate port at Dammam, is to be enlarged.

10. The growing demands of commerce in Hasa are recognised by an order establishing a commercial court on the model of that at Jedda. Foreign merchants must buy licences permitting them to trade. A committee of experts is to consider the cost of foodstuffs, so as to try to eliminate profiteering. The Crown Prince has ordered the establishment of a Chamber of Commerce. In fact, something of the kind already exists under the name of the Contractors Compensation Fund. The various municipalities, having been reorganised by the Syrian expert, will each receive a share of the customs dues levied at the eastern ports in proportion to their size and requirements.

11. There appears to have been no disposition to rush towards the establishment of new industries but rather a tendency to encourage agriculture. The Crown Prince had already decreed a sizeable loan for farmers in the Medina area. He has now made provision for a sum of two million Saudi riyals to be loaned to needy farmers in Hasa and a further half-million Saudi riyals to farmers in the Qatif area.

These loans are to be repaid in four instalments, the first of which falls due at the end of the second year. Landowners are also excused a quarter of the zakat due from them. This concession is nominally in order that they may give to the poor.

12. The great oil industry of the province is mentioned only indirectly. It is announced that the old labour ordinance has been reviewed and is about to be replaced by another which the Crown Prince has ordered to be sent to the Advisory Council for consideration and ratification. The Arabian-American Oil Company employ about 30,000 Saudis. A new labour ordinance could be a very serious matter for them but they await it with a fair degree of equanimity since they know that it has mainly been prepared by Hatem Zu'ubi, a Palestinian who studied law at Cambridge. As supervisor of the Government labour office at Dhahran, Hatem Zu'ubi has been careful not to favour the company, but they recognise his integrity and fairness.

13. Perhaps the most conspicuous, yet least important, of the changes was the removal of the great Amir Saud bin Jaluwi, noted for the ruthlessness of his summary justice, from Hofuf to Dammam. This move merely recognises the existing situation. Dammam, being at the centre of commercial activity and near the oilfields has become the real capital of the province. Saud bin Jaluwi, when free of the Crown Prince's presence, remains all powerful except in matters of finance. His brother, the Amir Abdul Mohsi, now goes to Hofuf. An administrative council composed of the heads of government departments in Hasa under the chairmanship of Saud bin Jaluwi is to meet weekly to discuss ways and means.

14. It is doubtful whether this council will do anything to heal the permanent dichotomy in Saudi administration. On the one hand there are the Amirs such as Saud bin Jaluwi exercising their normal administrative functions, on the other there is the Ministry of Finance under Abdulla Suleiman, which is practically an independent government. It has recently been announced that the head of the office of

the Ministry of Finance in Hasa, Sheikh Abdulla bin 'Adwan, has been raised to a Deputy Assistant Minister. This, again, merely recognises an existing position, for Abdulla bin 'Adwan, with the probable exception of Saud bin Jaluwi, appears to be the only person in Hasa who holds the Government code, and it is through him that all the Government communications with the Aramco pass. This dichotomy leads to surprisingly little ill-feeling, but is productive of a great deal of inefficiency.

15. In making this survey of the Crown Prince's activities in Hasa, I am very conscious of the six or seven hundred miles which separates me from that province. I have few opportunities of direct observation, and it is not easy to acquire reliable information. All the newspapers are published in the Hejaz. It may be then that we shall eventually find it desirable to establish a post in one of the towns of Hasa.

16. Nevertheless, the main lines of the Crown Prince's activity in Hasa are clear enough. The visit was obviously intended to be complementary to that to the Hejaz. The general remarks made in my despatch No. 142 of the 26th November, 1952, are again applicable. In particular, recent events seem to me to have reinforced the description of the Crown Prince and his position contained in the last five paragraphs of that despatch. If the changes in personnel and administration were less in Hasa than in the Hejaz, this was largely because reliable Nejdīs were already in the key positions and because of the more backward state of the province of Hasa; there was less in existence to reform.

17. Grotesque as it may sound of such a sybarite, the Crown Prince is not unlike an explorer. He and his country are voyaging into new and constantly changing conditions. While it is true that he is often defeated by them or deals with them in a clumsy manner, yet he does recognise the need for reform and innovation.

18. I am sending copies of this despatch, without the enclosure, to Her Majesty's Representatives at Bahrain and the B.M.E.O. at Fayid.

I have, &c.

G. C. PELHAM.

FRONTIER DISPUTE : EXPECTED SAUDI ARABIAN REPLY TO OUR ARBITRATION PROPOSAL

(No. 68)

Jedda,

March 5, 1953.

Her Majesty's Embassy at Jedda present their compliments to the Saudi Arabian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and in reply to the oral communications transmitted by the Saudi Arabian Government to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Jedda on the 28th February and the 3rd March have the honour to state that Her Majesty's Government note with satisfaction that a reply to their proposal for arbitration in the frontier dispute delivered to the Saudi Arabian Government on the 5th January will shortly be received. Her Majesty's Government confidently expect that the full consideration that the Saudi Arabian Government have given to this proposal will have convinced them of its merits.

2. Her Majesty's Government further note that the Saudi Arabian Government intend to publish the Standstill Agreement and kindred documents on the 6th March. Her Majesty's Government will also take steps to inform the public of recent events.

3. Her Majesty's Government share the Saudi Arabian Government's concern over the strict observance of the Standstill Agreement and have no intention of disregarding its provisions.

4. The complaints contained in the oral communications made by the Saudi Arabian Government to Her Majesty's Embassy on the 28th February, the 2nd March and the 3rd March to the effect that British warships have called at Dubai, that some soldiers have come to Sharjah, that British aircraft flew over certain areas, that some soldiers made an attack on a section of the Beni Ka'ab and other complaints of the same sort relate to actions which are beyond the scope of the Standstill Agreement and fall exclusively within the competence of Her Majesty's Government and the Rulers concerned.

5. As for the complaint that the Political Officer, Sharjah, and twenty-six soldiers visited Buraimi on the 25th February Her Majesty's Government have already assured the Saudi Arabian Government that in accordance with Article 3 (a) of the Standstill Agreement there will be no increase in the strength of the Trucial Oman Levies in the Buraimi oasis and any reports that the Levies are to be increased beyond the figure at the time the agreement was concluded are false.

6. The presence of a doctor in Buraimi against which the Saudi Arabian Government protested is for the immediate purpose of treating a case of smallpox which is beyond the existing medical resources of the oasis.

7. Her Majesty's Government feel sure that the Saudi Arabian Government is allowing itself to be unduly alarmed by irresponsible reports from its representative in Buraimi. The actions of Her Majesty's Government and the Rulers concerned constitute neither an aggression nor a danger to peace.

8. Her Majesty's Government consider that these observations satisfactorily answer the complaints made by the Saudi Arabian Government and hope that they will realise that their suspicions are unfounded. If any matters relating directly to the Standstill Agreement require clarification in accordance with paragraph 3 (f) of the Standstill Agreement Her Majesty's Government are prepared to agree to a meeting in Buraimi between Turki bin Ataishan and the British Political Officer.

Her Majesty's Embassy take this opportunity of renewing to the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Foreign Affairs the assurance of their highest consideration.

**FRONTIER DISPUTE : NOTE TO SAUDI ARABIAN GOVERNMENT
PRESENTED BY HER MAJESTY'S AMBASSADOR ON APRIL 2, 1953**

Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, acting on behalf of the Rulers concerned, have, on many occasions in the past, attempted to agree with the Saudi Arabian Government on the question of the frontiers of Saudi Arabia as they affect the Sheikdoms under the protection of Her Majesty's Government and the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman. Her Majesty's Government have consistently sought a settlement based on the historical claims of the Rulers and on all relevant considerations. The proposals thus put forward by Her Majesty's Government have been of an essentially conciliatory character. The claims of the Saudi Arabian Government, on the other hand, have advanced with the passage of time as the records of the various negotiations will show.

In 1951 Her Majesty's Government had the pleasure of discussing the whole question with His Royal Highness Emir Faisal in London. It was agreed in these discussions that negotiations with a view to a mutually satisfactory settlement should take place at a conference, to be convened at an early date. One of the objects of these discussions was to ensure that in the areas which in view of the Saudi Arabian Government's claims were regarded for the purpose of the discussions as being in dispute, nothing should be done, pending the conclusion of the proposed conference, which might prejudice the claims put forward by any party and that new activities which might have such prejudicial effect should be avoided. It was on this basis that the resumé of the discussions, which is sometimes known as the London Agreement, provided that the aforesaid areas should in the meantime be barred to the Trucial Oman Levies, and to the oil companies on both sides.

A Conference was duly convened at Dammam in the spring of 1952 and was by mutual consent adjourned after only a partial examination of the questions with which it was concerned. The parties, however, agreed at the Conference that, pending the resumption of negotiations, the restrictions referred to in the London Agreement would continue to be observed by them.

Nevertheless in the summer of 1952, while the Dammam Conference stood adjourned, a Saudi Arabian official with forty armed men proceeded through Abu Dhabi territory and established himself in the Buraimi Oasis. Her Majesty's Government protested against this action which was clearly at variance with the purpose of the London Agreement, and which was, moreover, most unwelcome to the Trucial Oman Sheikhs under their protection, and to the Sultan of Muscat, whose respective claims in the Oasis Her Majesty's Government support. Accordingly on behalf of the Trucial Sheikhs concerned and at the request of the Sultan of Muscat, Her Majesty's Government asked for the immediate withdrawal of the Saudi Arabian official and his armed men from the Buraimi Oasis and reserved their position and that of the aforesaid Rulers in regard to this area.

The Saudi Arabian Government refused to withdraw the official and his armed men from Buraimi and proposed instead a "Standstill" Agreement as a preliminary to a resumption of negotiations. In a spirit of conciliation, Her Majesty's Government agreed to this proposal without prejudice to the claims of any party. Before the "Standstill" Agreement had been drawn up and signed, however, the Saudi Arabian Government made an additional proposal, namely that the question of Buraimi should be separated from the question of the frontiers as a whole, that a Tripartite Commission should be appointed to carry out a plebiscite in Buraimi, and that the frontier should be delimited in accordance with the result.

Her Majesty's Government were unable to agree to such a proposal, for several reasons. First, the effect, and no doubt the purpose of the arrival in the Buraimi Oasis of the Saudi Arabian official and of his subsequent activities was to exercise influence over the inhabitants of Buraimi and of neighbouring regions. Second, a decision based upon a plebiscite would take no account of historical facts. Third, in their view the question of the frontiers has to be treated as a whole. After the signature of the "Standstill" Agreement, however, Her Majesty's Government made the constructive proposal that as the Dammam

Conference had revealed a wide divergence between their views and those of the Saudi Arabian Government on frontier questions, the whole matter should be referred to impartial arbitration. This proposal did not meet with the approval of the Saudi Arabian Government, who rejected it and again proposed that the question of Buraimi should be settled in isolation by means of a plebiscite.

In the meantime, in spite of the conclusion of the "Standstill" Agreement, evidence continued to reach Her Majesty's Government of attempts by the Saudi Arabian official in Buraimi to influence the tribes and tamper with their traditional allegiance contrary to the provisions of the said Agreement. Indeed, an attack was instigated under the Saudi flag against a Levy post in the Wadi el Qaur in an area never previously claimed as Saudi territory. At the same time the Saudi Arabian Government continued to maintain in communications to Her Majesty's Government that they regarded the Buraimi area and its vicinity as their undisputed territory and even claimed that all the peoples of Oman bore allegiance to His Majesty King Ibn Saud. Furthermore, documents were circulated in the towns of the Trucial coast purporting to show that Her Majesty's Government had acknowledged a Saudi Arabian claim to virtually the whole of the territory belonging to the Rulers under the protection of Her Majesty's Government. In these circumstances Her Majesty's Government had no alternative but to assist the Rulers in question to strengthen their authority while renewing to the Saudi Arabian Government the offer to submit the whole question of the frontiers to arbitration.

During the past few days the Saudi Arabian Government have despatched a second official with an armed escort some forty strong into Abu Dhabi territory. This force was halted at Al Tarif, a point well outside the area of even the latest Saudi Arabian claims. It then proceeded to Buraimi and, according to information in

the possession of Her Majesty's Government, it visited from there a number of places to the south, where its presence was unwelcome to the inhabitants: It returned to Buraimi and after some delay left for Saudi Arabia. Once again it penetrated as far into Abu Dhabi territory as Al Tarif. Even assuming that the whole of this armed force left Buraimi, its unwarranted incursions far into Abu Dhabi territory, its visits to Buraimi and the extension of its activities from Buraimi to a wide area beyond are altogether at variance with the purpose of the London Agreement and with the spirit and letter of the Buraimi "Standstill" Agreement. If any of the force have remained at Buraimi this would be a further contravention of the provisions of the "Standstill" Agreement which prohibit the introduction of any reinforcements. The Trucial Oman levy post maintained in Buraimi at the request of the Ruler of Abu Dhabi has never exceeded the figure at which it stood on the conclusion of the "Standstill" Agreement, despite frequent allegations of the Saudi Arabian Government to the contrary.

In view of the foregoing Her Majesty's Government are bound to conclude that the Saudi Arabian Government have destroyed the basis of the London Agreement and have not observed and do not intend to observe the Buraimi "Standstill" Agreement, and that their territorial claims are continually being increased. In these circumstances they and the Rulers under their protection are obliged to reserve complete freedom of action in regard to all matters covered by the aforesaid Agreements. They are authorised to state on behalf of the Sultan of Muscat that His Highness reserves freedom of action in respect of matters covered by the Buraimi "Standstill" Agreement. At the same time they wish to inform the Saudi Arabian Government that they regard it as a matter of urgency that the question of the frontiers should be settled and for this purpose they renew once again their offer to submit the whole question to impartial arbitration.

EA 1081/379 No. 27

SAUDI ARABIAN FRONTIER DISPUTE*Note by the Secretary of the Cabinet*

By direction of the Prime Minister I circulate for information the texts of messages recently exchanged between the Prime Minister and King Ibn Saud.

NORMAN BROOK.

Cabinet Office,
April 10, 1953.

Message dated March 30 from the Prime Minister to King Ibn Saud

Your Majesty,

Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have to-day authorised the despatch of a Note to Your Majesty's Government which I have no doubt will be displeasing to You. Will Your Majesty permit me to add these few personal words as an old friend and comrade in the war.

It is my personal wish and that of my colleagues in Her Majesty's Government that the friendship between the peoples of our two countries, which has been a source of strength and comfort in days of adversity, should prosper and continue even firmer. I do not intend for my part to allow it to be disturbed by events which I trust will prove only temporary.

But it is my duty as Prime Minister and as a friend to point out that Her Majesty's Government stand in friendly relations to Your Majesty's neighbours, to whom indeed they are for the most part bound by solemn obligations. Her Majesty's Government have every intention of maintaining those relations and of honouring those obligations. If in so doing they grieve another valued friend, that is a matter for great regret, but it cannot be a reason for inaction. What would the friendship of Great Britain be worth if she abandoned the weaker of her friends for the sake of the stronger?

We shall stand up for what we believe to be right. Your Majesty will undoubtedly do the same, and neither of us shall think the worse of the other for it. If neither of us can convince the other, is it beyond the power of statesmanship to find the means of reconciling our views, with justice and honour?

In the meantime I pray you, Sir, to accept my respectful wishes for Your Majesty's health and happiness and for the welfare and prosperity of Your Majesty's Kingdom.

Your Majesty's friend, &c.

WINSTON CHURCHILL.

Telegram dated April 4 from Jedda to Foreign Office

Mr. Pelham.

(No. 111)

Following is text in translation of reply, dated 4th April, from King Ibn Saud to the Prime Minister telegraphed from Riyadh:—

"Dear Churchill,

I have received your friendly message to which I have given my full attention. The fine expressions which it contains have reminded me of that dear friendship on both sides on which, for tens of years, the policies of our two countries have centred in the service of peace and humanity, and in those hard times when we stood together side by side and during which you called us the friend of the dark nights.

All this makes me do everything possible for the maintenance and continuation of this friendship. The Buraimi question, in which I believe we have the right and in which your Excellency sees otherwise, should not be a reason for the collapse and destruction of this deep-rooted friendship. At the end of paragraph 4 of your Excellency's message the following is stated—

'if neither of us can convince the other, is it beyond the power of statesmanship to find the means of reconciling our views, with justice and honour?'

This desire finds in me a strong echo.

Therefore I request Your Excellency to point out to us ways and means leading to that, so that we may all follow them to reach our desired goal in this problem in a way which maintains justice and preserves honour."

Telegram dated April 8 from Foreign Office to Jedda

(No. 301)

Following is the text of a message from Prime Minister to King Ibn Saud:—

"I have received Your Majesty's prompt and eloquent reply to my

message. I would ask you now to receive Her Majesty's Ambassador, who has Her Majesty's Government's full confidence and who will explain to you our thoughts on ways and means of reaching an honourable and just solution to our problem."

EA 1081/440

No. 28

MESSAGE FROM KING IBN SAUD TO THE PRIME MINISTER*Mr. Eden to Mr. Pelham (Riyadh)*

(1)

(No. 2)

(Telegraphic)

*Foreign Office,**April 22, 1953.*

Your telegram No. 1 [of 21st April: Frontier dispute].

Please telegraph second paragraph of His Majesty's message. Translation received here is not clear and contains no paragraphs.

EA 1081/456

MESSAGE FROM KING IBN SAUD TO THE PRIME MINISTER*Mr. Eden to Sir R. Hay (Bahrain)*

(2)

(No. 539. Confidential)

(Telegraphic)

*Foreign Office,**April 22, 1953.*

Riyadh telegram No. 1 to me [of 21st April].

Following is a translation (subject to confirmation) received from the Saudi Embassy of the message from Ibn Saud to the Prime Minister:—

"According to your Excellency's wish I have received Her Majesty's Ambassador, Mr. Pelham, who handed to me your letter in which you express a desire to reach an amicable and just solution to the question of the south-eastern sector of my country. My old friend knows that I have prevented the people from taking any action that would affect the good and old existing relations between me and the British Government. I am not ignorant of the strength of Great Britain which makes her capable to dictate her wishes. I expressed to Her Majesty's Ambassador my willingness to discuss with him the possibilities of finding a middle course which would combine the British Government's suggestion for arbitration and mine for plebiscite. Would it not be possible for

my old friend to re-examine the present situation and help to restore it to what it was when the Agreement was reached in London in August 1951 and that of Riyadh 26th October, 1952? It would not be possible for an international body to act freely if a situation remains as it is at the present moment where feelings are tense due to the unilateral abrogation of the agreement by the British Government. I regret, and I think you agree with me here, that the British Government should suggest that her actions were due to the Saudi Arabian Government breaches of the above-mentioned agreements. All those who followed my personal history from the beginning know that I honour the agreements I enter to most faithfully. I have never abrogated an agreement and never breached a promise. I feel sure that had Mr. Churchill known of the facts and of what is being done in that area by the forces which had been sent by the British Government he would see the impossibilities to reach a peaceful and just solution under pressure terrorism and inhumanly preventing provisions from reaching the people of that area. Have your Excellency heard of the action

taken by the British forces in the Mosque of Sa'arah on the 17th April, 1952? While people were praying? They took Sheikh Mohammed Ibn Saif, the Sheikh of Sa'arah, and dragged him by his beard through the town for no other reason other than being a Saudi National. The blockade is becoming more intolerable and all provisions going to that area are being confiscated. The forces that I have in that part do not exceed forty men in an area which has a hundred thousand metres while the British Government have reinforced her position there, before that Stand-Still Agreement, to an extent that by far exceed the necessities. The presence of the forty Saudis was simply for usual security measures. The British

forces in blockading Buraimi and its inhabitants have built new posts in Zafnah and Mijan which fall in our territory. I am very anxious to settle this dispute in a peaceful and just manner and I shall wait for your Excellency's answer to return the situation there to what it was before the abrogation of London and Riyadh agreements on the 2nd April, 1953, unilaterally by Britain, and to reinforce these two agreements and this I am sure will help to settle the dispute between friends and restore honour and respect to international agreements. I am awaiting your Excellency's reply and would like to take this opportunity to send you my very best regards."

EA 1081/448

No. 29

ACCEPTANCE BY THE SAUDI ARABIAN GOVERNMENT OF THE PRINCIPLE OF ARBITRATION FOR SETTLEMENT OF THE SOUTH-EASTERN FRONTIERS

Mr. Pelham to Sir Winston Churchill. (Received April 24)

(No. 2. Confidential) *Riyadh,*
(Telegraphic) *April 23, 1953.*

Riyadh telegram No. 1.

On 22nd April the Saudi Arabian Government fully accepted the principle of arbitration for settlement of the south-eastern frontiers.

2. The Saudi Arabian Government have put forward for discussion draft of joint statement to be issued as soon as possible. Text in my immediately following telegram.

3. To-day I will have preliminary discussions on the method of implementation.

I have indicated readiness to enter into full negotiations as soon as I receive your instructions.

4. The Saudis showed anxiety about the situation of the disputed areas. [group undecypherable: ? However] it may be possible to avoid actions which might be construed as incidents.

5. I return to Jeddah on the 24th April.

6. I do not propose to repeat further telegrams on the frontier dispute to the United Kingdom Delegation, New York.

7. Do you approve?

EA 1081/504

No. 30

AGREEMENT OF KING IBN SAUD TO THE DEFINITION OF THE SOUTH-EASTERN FRONTIERS OF SAUDI ARABIA BY MEANS OF ARBITRATION

Mr. Pelham to Sir Winston Churchill. (Received May 6)

(No. 54. Confidential) *Jedda,*
Sir, *April 28, 1953.*

I have the honour to report that in accordance with your telegram No. 300 of 8th April entrusting me with a special

mission to King Ibn Saud, I proceeded to Riyadh and secured the agreement of His Majesty to the definition of the south-eastern frontiers of Saudi Arabia by means of arbitration. I have already transmitted

to you in Riyadh telegram No. 3 of 23rd April the text of the draft joint declaration proposed by the Saudi Arabian Government.

2. At an audience of His Majesty on the afternoon of 19th April, which occupied an hour and twenty minutes, I stressed your friendship and that of the British people for His Majesty and for Saudi Arabia. I laid great emphasis upon the complete impartiality of arbitration, and showed how it was now the only method of settlement consonant with justice and honour. I explained that it was the desire of Her Majesty's Government that Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom should be equal before the arbitral tribunal and that the tribunal should give due weight to all relevant considerations including *inter alia* the King's historical claims and the wishes of the peoples concerned. I refused to be drawn into any discussion about the details of present or past actions in the disputed areas, but I made it clear that the decision of Her Majesty's Government communicated to the Saudi Arabian Government on 2nd April had been made reluctantly but firmly in the conviction that our responsibilities and the progressive deterioration of the situation left us with no alternative.

3. On his side King Ibn Saud did not persist in attempting to discuss our alleged delinquencies but displayed a genuine desire to come to grips with the main problem. It was soon evident that to him the main problem was not so much a matter of procedure as the maintenance of what he conceived to be his honour and his reputation as the Father of the Arabs. He mentioned neither the word "plebiscite" nor "arbitration" though he twice spoke of "arbitrators." His attitude was that his ancient friendship for Britain overrode all other considerations save his honour and his religion. These would be irrevocably impaired were he to abandon people of his own faith who had been loyal to his family for generations and who still claimed his protection. He could only be freed from his duty towards them if it became clear that of their own free will they no longer desired his protection.

4. I matched my arguments with his attitude and spoke of our obligations and honour. The fundamental friendship subsisting between us forbade any desire of either to touch upon the other's honour. But a difference existed and the honourable and fair way to resolve it was for a decision upon the facts to be made by a completely

neutral and impartial tribunal which might take into account all relevant considerations. The facts themselves could not impugn the honour of either of us; let us discover these facts by impartial adjudication and we should have put an end to our difference while maintaining justice, honour and friendship. King Ibn Saud responded with an agreement to accept the decision of a number of impartial arbitrators provided it was done with agreement between us and it did not impugn his honour.

5. Such were the main lines of our conversation, but, in fact, the audience followed a much more tortuous and exhausting course. Scarcely a sentence of mine was permitted to pass without at least one, and often several, interruptions. The King was insistent and repetitive to a degree that seriously impeded any orderly discussion. I was forced to be equally insistent.

6. When I arrived at the Badia palace, accompanied by Mr. Thomson, afternoon prayers were in progress and we found the King upon his knees at the head of his retinue. His Majesty then listened to a religious reading which the official interpreter professed himself unable to understand. When this was concluded the audience began with expressions of friendship on either side and I most emphatically assured His Majesty that there was no thought on the part of Mr. Churchill, Her Majesty's Government, or the British people, of aggression against Saudi Arabia. The interruptions began almost at once. The King thrice referred to the alleged incident in the mosque at Sa'arah of which, unfortunately, he had just heard. He termed this an aggression and said he had no dispute with the Trucial Sheikhs or with the Sultan of Muscat. Meanwhile I attempted to establish that the King fully understood the British point of view and was aware of the full purport of the communications which had recently passed between the two Governments. Eventually I succeeded in getting Mr. Churchill's letter of 2nd April read out to the King. It became obvious that it had been read out to him before, but he seemed scarcely interested in anything that had gone before and showed complete confidence in Yusuf Yasin, his Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs. Indeed, on three separate occasions, His Majesty tried to break off the discussion and suggested that I should talk with his counsellors. This I politely declined to do, insisting upon my special mission from Mr. Churchill. I gained the impression that the King had

heard all our communications but was no longer very certain of their detailed contents. Moreover, I thought it possible that the King was not now able to distinguish between what he had said privately to his counsellors and what he had said in official communications to Her Majesty's Government.

7. The King's peroration upon his honour with which the audience concluded was cast in the heroic mould, yet it seemed to me that on this point he was utterly genuine. Until recently, he said, he could have dreamed of nothing which would have induced him to go to war with Britain, but he would expend every last man in Nejd and himself as well rather than allow any blemish upon his honour. Striking his chest and pointing his finger at me he said several times in the most emphatic manner, "My honour and my religion, my honour and my religion."

8. I had attempted to impress upon the King that there were three stages on the way to a friendly and just solution. First it was necessary for the Saudi Arabian Government to declare, as Her Majesty's Government had already done, their readiness to be bound by the decision of impartial adjudication. Thereafter the arbitrators could be agreed upon and then the terms of reference. The King showed himself very interested in finding a practical solution to the dispute, and he seemed to think this lay in the agreed appointment of impartial arbitrators, but when I left the audience chamber I still could not be certain that His Majesty thoroughly accepted the declaration of principle. I was, however, determined that my plan would be to stand upon the King's expressed readiness to appoint arbitrators and to insist upon further audiences of His Majesty if necessary.

9. I soon had occasion to put the first part of this plan into execution for Yusuf Yasin called upon me the same evening and the battle began. At first the discussion was mild enough, centring upon some notes putting clearly what I had tried to say to the King, which I had earlier dictated to the interpreter. Yusuf tried to maintain that what the King had said in the afternoon was no more than an elaboration of his idea for a plebiscite. This I refused to accept. Yusuf then went into some detail about alleged British delinquencies in the disputed areas. Eventually I was forced to tell him that the Saudi charge of starvation was a lie. Having briefly stated the facts I refused to be drawn further and merely

replied that the whole object of Her Majesty's Government was to draw boundaries by mutual agreement so that we might put an end to these various complaints and counter-complaints. It soon became apparent that it was Yusuf's object to get us to restore the *status quo* of 26th October before further negotiations were entered into. Though he did not quite say so in plain terms, he clearly threatened the breaking-off of negotiations until we had withdrawn our troops. I repeatedly insisted that we had no aggressive intent and rehearsed our position as set out in my note of 2nd April.

10. We had a further meeting the next morning at which Yusuf Yasin handed me a copy of the message from the King to Mr. Churchill dated 20th April, which I reported in my telegram No. 1 from Riyadh. I referred to the third sentence, that which spoke of combining the solutions of arbitration and plebiscite, and said that this was the only sentence which could possibly be an answer to my mission. Did it mean that the King accepted Mr. Churchill's proposal to declare in principle his agreement to a settlement by impartial neutral decision? Yusuf Yasin countered by asking for an answer to the King's letter. Would Her Majesty's Government restore the *status quo* as it existed before 2nd April? I insisted that the object of my mission was to discover whether the King would declare the principle of arbitration. Everything else was irrelevant. I then made a comprehensive statement of Her Majesty's Government's position from the time of the 1951 Conference in London onwards. Yusuf asked whether my reference to equality meant that the Saudis might introduce an equal number of troops into the disputed areas. I replied that it meant that we should be equal before the arbitral tribunal. I then enquired whether the King's message meant that the Saudis were proposing that both sides should completely withdraw all their forces. Yusuf said "No," whereupon I reminded him of the Saudi attitude which had caused the British decision of 2nd April.

11. The same evening Yusuf returned to the charge, this time accompanied by Sheikh Khalid al Qarqani, another of the royal counsellors. It was a somewhat fierce interview and I was obliged to adopt a stiff tone. We went over the same ground as in the morning and Yusuf made a statement in reply to mine. He also said that the first and most important thing was to get an answer to the King's request for restoration

of the *status quo* as it had been before 2nd April. If we refused this he had no further instructions, but he imagined that Ibn Saud would not contemplate further negotiations. If we agreed he held out hope of reaching an agreement upon a method of solution. The Saudi Arabian Government could not negotiate under the threat of bayonets. Yusuf introduced the subjects of alleged British delinquencies, starvation, military threats, killings and occupation by force of Saudi Arabia. I repeated my earlier assurances that Her Majesty's Government had no hostile intention and refused to discuss this sort of thing. I said that the most important thing was for all parties to declare their willingness to settle the dispute by impartial arbitration, and that Her Majesty's Government could not now consider anything before this principle had been agreed upon.

12. Eventually, in answer to a question, Yusuf and Khalid clearly stated that the Saudi Arabian Government had no objection to the principle of impartial arbitration. Later they both made clear positive statements in favour of this method, but they refused to go further in writing than the King's message to Mr. Churchill and reiterated the necessity of obtaining an answer to this message. Yusuf again wanted to know whether the Saudis might put forces into the disputed areas equal to those of Her Majesty's Government. I said "No." Yusuf and Khalid withdrew and said they would report faithfully all that I had said.

13. The next meeting came twenty-four hours later, on the evening of 21st April. The cyclone had spent itself and was followed by a calm. Yusuf produced some notes which, if approved by the King and by Her Majesty's Government, he suggested might be issued as a joint communiqué by the two Governments. I listened without showing emotion, and made some remarks which I repeated the next evening when Yusuf and Khalid handed me an official draft of a joint statement which they said had been approved by the King and which was nearly identical with Yusuf's notes. This draft is contained in my telegram No. 3 from Riyadh. The main points of the remainder of the conversation are reported in my telegram No. 4 from Riyadh. I made it clear to Yusuf that though I had no instructions on the point I felt sure that Her Majesty's Government would not accept the Saudi formula for the restoration of the *status quo* of 26th October, and that

they would probably prefer either the maintenance of the present position or the restoration of the *status quo* before the arrival of Turki at Bureimi. Yusuf and Khalid produced the arguments against the latter suggestion which I have already reported. They added that Turki had already been restraining Saudi sympathisers and that they had instructed him to do all he could to keep the situation calm. I urged that King Ibn Saud should not adopt a rigid position on the last paragraph of this draft statement. They replied that the draft was a matter for agreement and that they would not be dogmatic; but it was evident that they intended to insist upon some solution not very dissimilar to that which they had proposed.

14. I had one further meeting with Yusuf Yasin which was notable for the complete though tentative agreement upon certain details of the appointment of arbitrators. This discussion was fully reported in my telegram No. 133 from Jeddah. Having gone as far as we could without reference to our Governments, we turned to discuss other matters. I mentioned our disappointment at the King's decision not to send the Crown Prince as his representative to Her Majesty's Coronation. Yusuf hinted broadly that if all went well with our frontier discussions the Crown Prince might still come. He advised me to say nothing about it and leave the matter to him.

15. I had an audience of King Ibn Saud on the afternoon of 23rd April at which, having been informed that the King would be gratified to receive a picture of Her Majesty the Queen, I presented him with one of the two with which I had been provided. The King received it graciously and gave immediate instructions that it should be taken to his wives. Nothing of note occurred at the audience which, though the King referred at some length to the rights of his ancestors, was most cordial. Declarations of eternal friendship and pious hopes of an early settlement of our differences were exchanged. The King asked me, "What is my name?" I correctly replied with that indispensable Churchillian phrase: "the friend of the darkest nights." King Ibn Saud was gratified, and said that he almost wished that the dark nights might come again so that once more he might prove his friendship.

16. The same evening I had a short audience of the Crown Prince who had returned from Damascus a few hours previously and was tired. He seemed to be in

excellent health and humour and expressed great pleasure when I presented him with a copy of Her Majesty's portrait. He requested that his best wishes for health and happiness should be conveyed to Her Majesty. He said he had been kept informed of all that had gone on regarding the frontier question, and hoped that it might soon be settled.

17. As I bade farewell to Yusuf Yasin on the morning of 24th April he said that he hoped that there might be some easing of the local situation in the disputed areas. In my telegram No. 132 from Jeddah I have already commented on the Saudi demand for a restoration of the *status quo* of 26th October. On further consideration I can only reinforce those arguments. If we wish for arbitration and reasonable terms of reference I do not think it is practicable to insist upon the withdrawal of Turki and his men. I would prefer to try for something on the lines of paragraph 4 of my telegram No. 132. It is possible that if the blockade on Buraïmi were lifted the Saudis would not object very strongly to our retention of forces further west. We might employ their own argument that by their presence they were maintaining peace in a dangerously disturbed area. This, however, I cannot guarantee, and I foresee that there may be some stiff battles ahead before we can secure a satisfactory joint statement and reasonable terms of reference. I hope that we may at least be able to tie

the Saudis to a public declaration of the principle of arbitration very shortly. The Saudi draft of the proposed joint declaration is so great an improvement upon their previous position that I am inclined to think that they now have a genuine desire for a settlement, but they will undoubtedly try for all possible advantage.

18. Though I never had to mention it specifically I felt all the advantage of British prestige and power just as I had noticed the lack of it when I was negotiating the Standstill Agreement last October. It would appear that now is the time to display our largeness of mind and spirit so that we may show the King that we can match him in nobility of sentiment and Yusuf Yasin that we outdo him in tenacity of purpose. This display of our means of influence, together with the fairness of our sentiments and proposals will, I believe, have a beneficial effect upon Anglo-Saudi relations. I hope it will also increase the confidence of the Americans in our ability to handle Arab affairs and in the justice of our position.

19. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Washington and Muscat, to Her Majesty's Political Resident in the Persian Gulf and to the Heads of the United Kingdom Delegation at New York and of the British Middle East Office.

I have, &c.

G. C. PELHAM.

EA 1081/505

No. 31

REPLY FROM THE SAUDI ARABIAN GOVERNMENT TO HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT NOTE OF APRIL 2, 1953 CONCERNING THE BURAIMI DISPUTE, THE WADI AL QU'UR INCIDENT AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF CIRCULARS ON THE OMAN COAST

Enclosure 1 to Jeddah Despatch No. 56 of April 29, 1953. (Received May 6)

Note Verbale handed to His Excellency Mr. Pelham at Riyadh on April 23, 1953

No. 1/1/10

April 23, 1953.

The Saudi Arabian Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs presents his compliments to Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador in Jeddah and has the honour to acknowledge receipt of his Note No. 99/1082/426/53 of 2nd April, 1953 addressed to the Saudi

Arabian Minister in charge of Foreign Affairs, and hereunder gives His Excellency the Saudi Arabian Government's reply to the contents of the Note referred to.

1. His Majesty's Government have no intention of dealing in this Note with the ways now being studied for a solution of the

differences which unfortunately exist between the Saudi Arabian Kingdom and the United Kingdom concerning the south-eastern frontiers of the Saudi Arabian Kingdom, but the Saudi Arabian Government wish to clarify the incidents listed in His Excellency's Note of the 2nd April, 1953, and which are considered by His Majesty's Government as partly inconsistent with the actual facts.

2. The jurisdiction of His Majesty King Abdul Aziz in the regions which the British Government dispute with the Saudi Arabian Government has been wielded for a long time at the hands of tribal sheikhs and through successive visits by competent officials sent by the Amir of the Eastern Area. In addition, His Majesty's Government saw fit in 1371 (1952) to send a small number of civil officials to quieten the situation in that area which had resulted from the entry of the British Political Officer into those Saudi territories without permission. This action (by His Majesty's Government) conflicts in no way with the London Agreement because Buraïmi is not mentioned in the London discussions. Therefore His Majesty's Government cannot admit that the exercise by Saudi officials of their administrative duties in that area conflicts with what was agreed upon in London, as Buraïmi and the connected area was not a subject of dispute before.

3. The same can also be said about the visit to Buraïmi and other areas of Mohammed Mansour, head of the Zakat collectors in the Eastern Area. The tour of this official is not an innovation, but one of annual visits made at known seasons and times. Mohammed bin Mansour went on his tour this year as in previous years, and returned after fulfilling his mission. None of those who accompanied him remained behind in Buraïmi, as they have no concern with the Saudi police force of Buraïmi. It is therefore clear that the Saudi Arabian Government have neither violated the London Agreement nor the Standstill Agreement.

4. As regards the reference in the Note to an attack under the Saudi flag against the Levies post in Wadi Al Qu'ur, His Majesty's Government have already given in their Note No. 1/1/10/579 of 26th March, 1953 (16th Rajab 1372) a categorical denial of this. They did not authorise anyone to carry out such an act, which—if in fact it did take place—must have been arranged by persons with whom the Saudi Arabian Government have no connection; and it is assumed that it was arranged by the other side in justification of intended actions.

5. As to what was said about the distribution of circulars in Oman Coast towns, the Saudi Arabian Government have no knowledge about those circulars and have heard nothing about them except in the Note from His Excellency the Ambassador dated 2nd April.

6. His Majesty's Government have always been careful to recognise the provisions of the London and Standstill Agreements in spite of repeated violations of them at the hands of persons belonging to the British authorities, of which due notice was given by His Majesty's Government to the British Government. His Majesty's Government wish to enclose with this Note a statement showing actions committed by the British authorities which contravene what was agreed upon.

7. His Majesty's Government have received with great astonishment the British Government's unilateral cancellation of the Agreements of London and Riyadh. This is a violation which weakens the importance of international agreements and reciprocal commitments and leads to the loss of confidence in international contracts and agreements. In spite of this, His Majesty's Government will continue their efforts to arrive at a friendly and equitable solution so long as they can find a way towards that end.

8. The undersigned, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, takes this opportunity to renew to His Excellency the assurance of his high regard.

YUSUF YASIN.

FRONTIER DISPUTE : ACCEPTANCE BY KING SAUD OF THE IDEA OF ARBITRATION

Sir Winston Churchill to Mr. Pelham (Jedda)

(1)

(No. 355. Confidential) *Foreign Office,*
(Telegraphic) *May 2, 1953.*

I have reviewed the situation. I understand that Ibn Saud is helpful and that, in accepting the idea of arbitration, he is ahead of his Counsellors. I also see that in these circumstances we must make Ibn Saud's path as smooth as possible and I recognise that his pride is involved.

2. Bearing all these considerations in mind, I have nevertheless come to the settled conclusion that Her Majesty's Government could not agree to neutral supervision in any form while the arbitration is taking place. We do not want to increase meddling by foreigners in this part

of the world and I do not see why it should be necessary if we and the Saudis trust one another. I think that we should be able to agree between friends that neither side would improve on its present position while arbitration is taking place.

3. My immediately following telegram contains a personal message from me to Ibn Saud which explains my proposals. Please deliver it to him in the course of your representations. You will see that I am quite prepared to allow Turki to obtain essential supplies, for his party of eighty, pending arbitral decision.

4. A later telegram will be sent with further detailed comments.

EA 1081/513

Sir Winston Churchill to Mr. Pelham (Jedda)

(2)

(No. 356. Confidential) *Foreign Office,*
(Telegraphic) *May 2, 1953.*

My immediately preceding telegram.

Following is personal telegram from Sir Winston Churchill to King Ibn Saud.

I am so glad Your Majesty has decided upon arbitration. We will loyally carry out this process and faithfully abide by the verdict. While the arbitration is taking place, it shall be a matter of honour between us

that no advantages are to be taken by either side in the military position.

Secondly, about Turki; he and his force of eighty must of course be adequately supplied while the arbitration is being settled. Will you do this or shall I? I will accept your decision. We should of course let each other know if we have any complaints. I hope you will take this as an agreement between friends.

With my best wishes and respect.

EA 1081/541

No. 33

MESSAGE FROM KING IBN SAUD TO THE PRIME MINISTER

(Received May 13)

Riyadh, 11th May, 1953.
27th Shaaban, 1372.

Text of a personal message from His Majesty King Abdul Aziz Al Saud delivered in Riyadh to His Excellency Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador for transmittal to the Right Honourable Sir Winston S. Churchill, Her Britannic Majesty's Prime Minister in

the United Kingdom, in reply to his personal message to His Majesty.

1. In response to the message from your Excellency which the British Ambassador, Mr. Pelham, delivered to us on 7th May, 1953, we assure your Excellency once more how highly we value the ties of friendship between us,

a friendship which has never faltered even in times of danger and adversity. It is this friendship which has moved us constantly to seek a just solution of the differences between our two countries, and most recently to agree to the settlement of these differences by means of a neutral and impartial body.

2. In the letter I sent to your Excellency on 22nd April, 1953, I referred to the arbitrary acts carried out by British forces against my officials and the sons of my people in a region I consider my domain and the domain of my forefathers. I requested that we should respect what we had agreed upon in the London Agreement and the Standstill Agreement of Riyadh so that we might provide an atmosphere enabling us to arrive at a friendly solution. I regret to inform your Excellency that these arbitrary acts are still continuing.

3. I have welcomed and still welcome the friendly solution whose principles were agreed upon in Riyadh with Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador, but on condition that our two countries should be on a footing of equality in these disputed areas. Such equality existed on the basis of the London Agreement and the Standstill Agreement, but as a result of the actions taken by the British Government during recent weeks a disparity of forces has arisen which can not but prejudice the impartial investigation and the equitable result which both parties desire.

4. In your message your Excellency proposes that it shall be "a matter of

honour between us that no advantages are to be taken by either side in the military position." Engagements of honour are for friends and equals. The British Government has prejudiced the principles agreed upon by securing for itself at this time military advantages in the disputed areas. Nevertheless, we—as your Excellency knows—have refrained from any corresponding counter-measures.

5. We are confident that respect for the principle of equality between friends will be helpful in solving the dispute. Equality can be secured by continuing to carry out what was agreed upon in the Standstill Agreement of Riyadh and what was established at the London Conference. As soon as your Excellency confirms this, we are ready to exchange with your Excellency honourable assurances that nothing shall be done by either side to prejudice this.

6. If anything happens to prejudice this, the neutral and impartial body regarding the selection of which we shall agree shall have the power to see that these two agreements are enforced in these disputed areas until the dispute is solved.

7. It is our earnest hope that through your Excellency's intervention this obstacle to an impartial solution of our differences will be speedily removed.

With best wishes.

(Enclosure to Jedda despatch No. 62 of 13th May, 1953.)

EA 1081/542

No. 34

NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE SETTLEMENT OF THE FRONTIER DISPUTE BETWEEN THE SAUDI ARABIAN GOVERNMENT AND HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT BY MEANS OF ARBITRATION

Mr. Pelham to Sir Winston Churchill. (Received May 20)

(No. 63. Confidential) *Jedda,*
Sir, *May 13, 1953.*

With reference to my printed letter despatches Nos. 61 and 62 of 13th May. I had the honour to report in my telegram No. 150 of the 13th May and others of the same date that recent discussions in Riyadh on the subject of the frontier dispute began

and ended with the same deadlock. In accordance with your instructions I insisted that the essential preliminary to further progress was agreement upon and issuance of a joint public statement declaring that the dispute would be solved by means of arbitration. I urged with all the force at my command that the local situation should

subsidiary agreements, and that the present position, if it was to be changed at all, could not be changed until arbitration was under way. Yusuf Yasin countered by saying that in the Saudi view the British had denounced various agreements which covered the local position with but flimsy excuses of provocation and that consequently the restoration of the *status quo ante* the 2nd April was a condition of the King's agreement to arbitration and he insisted upon this. Rather surprisingly Yusuf Yasin added that it had been reported to him that we had withdrawn some of our troops from the Buraimi oasis. I merely remarked that this demonstrated the spirit of your personal message to the King. I had not then received your telegram saying that there would be changes in troops but not a reduction in numbers or I might not have been so glib.

12. Thus a great deal of time and energy was consumed and still we had not reached our draft statement. I could not risk insisting that we should immediately consider it lest this should be taken to mean that in the consideration of it I would be prepared to bargain and allow some concession to the Saudis in regard to the local position. Indeed when Khalid al Qarqani suggested that we might make progress with this method of procedure I had to remind him quite sharply that the only way of making progress was to press ahead with arbitration. I hammered home the points that arbitration and the position on the spot were quite separate questions; that the latter, on which I had stated my last position, had nothing to do with the joint statement.

13. At length Yusuf Yasin retreated to the extent of admitting that it was not necessary that paragraph 6 of the Saudi draft, regarding reversion to the position existing before the 2nd April, should appear in the joint statement provided it was agreed to as a precondition to the issuance of the joint statement. He would go no further and for relief we turned to an examination of the drafts of the joint statement, with the results reported in my telegram No. 151. I imagined that Yusuf Yasin's proposed amendment to the Arabic version of our paragraph 1 had the principal object of omitting the word "Oman," but he assured me that it was merely a matter of phraseology to maintain consistency with previous Saudi official documents and that he had no objection to the English text, which

would have validity equal to the Arabic text. His point in relation to the Arabic text of paragraph 3, regarding the "nomination" or "appointment" of the British and Saudi members of the arbitral body, seemed to me a valid one. Though I assume from your telegram No. 345 that his interpretation expresses your intention that these should be direct appointments by the respective Governments. I said I would refer it to you. There was as we expected a tussle over our paragraph 4, regarding the terms of reference to the arbitral body. Yusuf Yasin of course wished to insert all the more objectionable points in their draft. However, having secured the omission of the phrase "the main basis for the decision" and the words "desires" and "Plebiscites" I felt, though I did not say so, that you might be able to accept one of the alternatives contained in paragraph 5 of my telegram No. 151 upon which the Saudis insisted. Having these alternatives I did not exercise the discretion given to me in your telegram No. 357. I put forward points 4(a) to (e) in your telegram No. 337 as some personal notes I had made in preparation for the terms of reference. The Saudis are prepared to accept them as such provided it is agreed that they will form part of the special agreement.

14. In discussing the points (a) to (e) Yusuf Yasin asked two questions. "If either side submits a matter to the arbitral body can that body consider it without the approval of the other side?" "If the body itself considers that some point not presented to it by either side is relevant can it of its own accord consider it?" In reply to the first question I referred Sheikh Yusuf to my point (e). I answered the second question by saying I would put it down, basing myself upon paragraph 1 of your telegram No. 26 of the 3rd January to Washington. It was to cover these points, so he said, that Sheikh Yusuf proposed his additional subparagraph (g). "This body will have the right to carry out any investigations which it may deem useful." I mentioned several times in the course of talk that we were of course only putting up a draft for approval.

15. The Saudi redraft of our paragraph 5 is apparently designed to omit the word "Arbitration." They leave to us the re-drafting of paragraph 6 so that it shall include all the rulers concerned, whether in some such general phrase as this or by name. However, if we use the phrasing of paragraph 1 of our draft I assume that they

would insist upon the same alterations in the Arabic text.

16. It was only after a great deal of argument and on the afternoon of the sixth day that I secured that any specific mention of arbitration should be included in the joint public statement and that the Saudi paragraphs contained in paragraph 4 of my telegram No. 153 should be omitted from it. The Saudis desired to avoid the words "arbitration" and "arbitral" on the grounds that their inclusion without the word "plebiscite" would appear to be a public victory for us. The crux of our disagreement was and continues to be in the Saudi paragraphs dealing with the situation in the disputed areas, the substance of which they insist upon as an essential precondition to their agreement to the joint public statement. They do not mind whether it is embodied in the joint public statement, in the terms of reference, or in a message from yourself to King Ibn Saud; but in one place or another they insist upon it.

17. On the fifth morning it became clear that we were about to start on yet another cycle of repetitious argument which would not contribute towards solving the deadlock. Accordingly I sought a second audience of the King which took place the same afternoon at the Badia palace. The King seemed in good health and spoke with greater vigour and clarity than usual, though after an hour's talk he indicated that he wished for a rest. At the beginning of the audience I was allowed to make an uninterrupted appeal to the King that he should respond to you in the spirit of your message. The King, however, swept aside all that I had said and made several long speeches to which he did not permit me to reply except in monosyllables. Some of his remarks were almost identical with those he had made on the 7th May. His chief point was a categorical assertion that the land was his and the people were his people. He was blameless but the British had neglected their agreements and encroached upon his land.

18. At length I was able to get it clearly established from the King's own mouth that he wished for a speedy settlement of the whole problem by arbitration and that he would gladly accept the arbitrators' decision based on historical facts and the loyalties of the people, whatever that decision might be. Shortly afterwards we came to the crux of the matter. I once again stressed your desire and need to deal personally with His Majesty on the basis of honour. Ibn Saud

then lucidly put his side of the argument, a summary of which is contained in paragraph 2 of my telegram No. 153. He made it abundantly clear that before he could proceed further with arbitration, Her Majesty's Government must accede to his request to withdraw their troops and raise the blockade. The King said he must insist on this because otherwise his dignity in the face of the Arab nations would be compromised. Moreover, the King continued, it is right that if we are to have an impartial neutral settlement neither side should have any advantage. It was intolerable that the British should be blockading his men, and he would not surrender to force. Had he wished to resort to the same means he could easily have sent in 10,000 or 15,000 armed men. "Sir Winston Churchill," he said, "has made it a matter of honour. Very well. I will solemnly give my word of honour and swear upon all that is holy that on my side of the agreement I will not send any more men to the disputed areas. Let Sir Winston Churchill withdraw his forces, raise the blockade and similarly give his word of honour. Then and only then can arbitration proceed."

19. I had further argument both with the King and with the royal counsellors but they remained adamant upon this position. It was not, however, until the late afternoon of the following day, the 12th May, that I was handed the text of the King's personal message to you and the Saudi redraft of the joint public statement. On this occasion each side reaffirmed their previous position.

20. In my telegram No. 153 of the 13th May I have commented fully on the Saudi attitude and possible replies to it. In my view the fundamental point is that a settlement by arbitration is very much to our interest and I therefore feel that it is in our interests to make concessions necessary to achieve this. I certainly hope that we should not have to accede to the full extent of the Saudi demands, but it is depressing to contemplate a situation of growing animosity in this country of former friends as compared with a settlement once and for all by impartial arbitration. From them we seem able to get a permanent settlement: from us they are demanding concessions the value of which will disappear with the announcement of the arbitral award. It should be possible to secure safeguards that the concessions we might make would not harm our case before the arbitral body. I am not competent to judge what concessions to the King in this matter are likely

seriously to damage our prestige in the Persian Gulf but I feel sure that a final settlement could only in due course strengthen it while failure to achieve such a settlement will, I submit, tend to create a permanent uncomfortable commitment and lower our influence with not only Saudi Arabia but also the United States of America.

ES 1106/1

No. 35

FORMATION OF HIGH ECONOMIC COUNCIL

Mr. Pelham to Sir Winston Churchill. (Received June 3)

(No. 72 E. Restricted) *Jedda,*
Sir, *May 27, 1953.*

I have the honour to enclose herein, as Annex 1, copy of a series of regulations governing the formation of a High Economic Council in Saudi Arabia. These regulations, though ratified by the Crown Prince (the Emir Saud) on the 7th of March, have only recently been published in the main local newspaper *Bilad as-Saudiyah*. The object of the Council is stated in Article 4.

2. Other councils with advisory powers on various matters of Government already exist in Saudi Arabia, although many are moribund. I understand that the idea of an Economic Council has been in the minds of certain Saudi officials for a long time; it may also have been stimulated by Dr. Young, the first Head of the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency, who left the country last year. I have reason to believe that the original idea was to reduce the amount of personal influence which the Minister of Finance at present exercises on the King's decisions on economic affairs. But the Minister has apparently succeeded in removing from the Council all those members originally nominated to it but not directly connected with his Ministry. I enclose as Annex 2 copy of a letter addressed by the King to the Minister of Finance (published simultaneously in *Bilad as-Saudiyah*) which shows those names now deleted.

3. The President of the Council is now to be the Minister of Finance himself. The Council has not yet met (in spite of the provision that it should do so every quarter) and as at present composed it seems doubtful whether it will ever achieve much. The

21. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Washington and Consul-General at Muscat, to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf and to the heads of the United Kingdom Delegation at New York and the British Middle East Office at Fayid.

I have, &c.

G. C. PELHAM.

secretary is an able, and so far as I know, honest Palestinian named Rajaeh Hussein, who has recently arrived in the Ministry as Economic Affairs Adviser, but it remains to be seen whether he will be allowed to breathe some life into the Council.

I have, &c.

G. C. PELHAM.

Annex 1 to No. 35

High Economic Council Regulations

Part A.—Formation of Council

Article 1

This regulation shall be known as the High Economic Council Regulation.

Article 2

Formation of the Council.

The High Economic Council shall be formed of the members whose names have been given in the Royal Order No. 5934 dated 27/2/72 (15/11/52).

Article 3

The President of the Council may, when necessary, invite to the sessions of the Council persons whose expert opinion he wishes to hear or Heads of Departments concerned as need be. These shall have the right to take part in the debates but not in the voting. The president may also form (either from the members of the Council or from outsiders or from both combined) sub-committees to study certain matters which the president will define and to submit their recommendations thereon to the Council.

Part B.—Jurisdiction of the Council

Article 4

The High Economic Council is an advisory body whose duty it is to look into matters referred to them affecting the economic affairs of the country and the promotion of the general national wealth and to submit recommendations thereon to the high authorities. The Government will decide whether or not to accept, modify or reject such recommendations.

The duties of the Council will, in particular, include enquiries into projects and proposals passed by or through governmental departments concerned on the following matters:—

1. Study of projects and economic programmes generally.
2. Study of commercial propositions and regulations affecting the organisation of trade, import, export and distribution of quota commodities.
3. Study of projects and regulations affecting companies and currencies and the imposition of fresh taxes and fees or the modification of existing taxes and fees.
4. Study of projects affecting special regulations on the modification of the Customs tariff whether in part or in whole.
5. Study projects of commercial, economic and Customs agreements between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and foreign countries.
6. Study projects for the grant of concessions.

Article 5

The Council may draw the attention of the Government to matters considered to have any bearing on the economic affairs of the country and submit pertinent proposals about them in accordance with the Council's internal constitution.

Part C.—Internal Regulations

Article 6

The functions of the Economic Council shall be co-ordinated in the following manner:—

1. *Office.*—The Council will have an office administered by a secretary who will act on the direction of the president. The duties of the office will be to prepare the agenda, invite the Council members to convene, note down the minutes of meetings, keep the records and submit

resolutions taken to the competent authorities. The secretariat of the Council will be undertaken by the Director of the Economic Affairs Department assisted by one or more employees as necessary.

2. *Meetings.*—The Council shall meet whenever necessary on invitation from the President but at least four times each year.
3. *Agenda.*—The secretary will prepare the agenda for each meeting. The agenda will give a brief summary of each subject being discussed. After the president has agreed to the agenda, the latter will be distributed to the members with the brief summary mentioned and should reach them at least 48 hours before the meeting. The president, however, has the right in exceptional circumstances to ask the Council to discuss a matter or fresh subject irrespective of this provision.
4. *Submission of proposals.*—The members of the Council and heads of departments concerned have the right to submit proposals for consideration by the Council. Such proposals should reach the secretary at least ten days before the date of a meeting and should be accompanied by a brief explanatory note. Should it be necessary to acquire fuller information regarding any of these proposals the secretary may, once the president agrees, first refer the same to the governmental authorities concerned for their view prior to putting the proposal before the Council.
5. *Legal Quorum.*—The legal quorum for meetings will consist of a simple majority of members. Should this not be available the meeting will be postponed to another time to be fixed by the president which should be no less than three days from the date of the first meeting. The members will be notified in writing at least one day before the date fixed and the meeting shall be considered legal irrespective of the number of members present.
6. *Votes.*—The recommendations of the Council shall be decided by a simple majority vote. Should there be an equal number of votes the president will have the casting vote.

Part D

Article 7

Any amendment to Parts (a) and (b) affecting the constitution of the Council may only be made by Royal Decree. As regards Part C affecting internal regulations of the Council, amendment may be made by a resolution taken by the Council.

The persons who shall constitute the High Economic Council are:—

- H.E. The Minister of Finance.
- H.E. the Deputy for Minister of Finance, as member.
- H.E. The Counsellor for Ministry of Finance, as member.
- H.E. The Assistant Deputy Minister for Economic Affairs as member.
- H.E. The Assistant Deputy Minister of Finance for Companies and Development schemes, as member.
- The Director-General of Customs, as member.
- The President of Mecca Chamber of Commerce, as member.

EA 1081/293

No. 36

SAUDI ALLEGATION OF BRITISH AGGRESSION AGAINST MOHAMMED BIN MANSUR AND HIS PARTY

Enclosure to Jedda despatch No. 40 of March 21, 1953

From the Saudi Arabian Ministry for Foreign Affairs

(1)

Jedda,
March 19, 1953.

The Saudi Arabian Ministry for Foreign Affairs present their compliments to Her Majesty's Embassy at Jedda and make reference to the Embassy's Note No. 84/1082/279/53 of the 15th March, 1953 and further to the conversation which took place between Taher Radhwan and His Excellency the British Ambassador, Jedda, on 2/7/72 (18th March, 1953) in connection with the aggression of the British Forces against Mohammed bin Mansur and the stopping of him whilst he was on his way in Saudi territories to perform his mission of Zakat collection which the Saudi Government have been in the habit of levying from their subjects in that area. The Ministry have the honour to state that the party which was under the command of Ibn Mansur was not composed of military forces and was not a reinforcement to the forces in

The Director-General of Finance Department, as member.

Annex 2 to No. 35

Royal Decree on the Regulation of the High Economic Council

Saud bin Abdel Aziz bin Abdel Rahman Al Feisal to Abdullah Suleiman

Peace be with you and God's mercy and blessings:—

A letter has been received from my lord His Majesty the King under reference No. 2457/3 of 16/2/72 (4/11/52) to the effect that the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, the head of the Viceroy's Diwan, the head of Diwan for the Ministry of Interior, the Deputy Chairman of the Advisory Council and the Major of the Capital are not to participate in the State Economic Council which we have already ordered to be formed. The other members will continue to be members in the Council. This is what we wish to inform you and Peace be with you.

been established at new positions in spite of the protests of the Saudi Government and the touring of British armed cars in these regions which never happened heretofore. In spite of protests made about this by the Saudi Government the British authorities in that area still continue their aggressions.

The Saudi Government, whilst making a strong protest about these happenings also express their deep regret at the state of affairs which has been reached which is considered to be a blow to the strong friendship

EA 1081/293

REPUDIATION OF THE SAUDI ALLEGATION THAT HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT FABRICATED THE INCIDENT IN WADI AL QAUR

Enclosure to Jedda despatch No. 40 of March 21, 1953

From Her Majesty's Embassy

(2)

(No. 90) *Jedda,*
(Telegraphic) *March 21, 1953.*

Her Majesty's Embassy at Jedda present their compliments to the Saudi Arabian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and have the honour to refer to the aide-mémoire communicated by the Saudi Arabian Government to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Jedda on the 29th January in which the Saudi Arabian Government allege that Her Majesty's Government fabricated the incident in Wadi al Qaur. The Saudi Arabian Government's aide-mémoire states that this is a matter which has "absolutely no foundation of truth and which we deny categorically and definitely."

2. Her Majesty's Embassy have the honour to bring the following facts which have been ascertained after full investigation to the notice of the Saudi Arabian Government. On the 23rd January Abdullah Salim of the Beni Ka'ab tribe appeared before the Trucial Oman levy post at Khurus in the territory of the Ruler of Sharjah with about fifty men and demanded its surrender. He had previously taken up positions in the immediate neighbourhood, and had hoisted the Saudi flag beside the well on the road to Huwailat. He addressed a letter to the levy commander calling upon him to surrender. On the morning of the 24th January, reinforcements were sent from Sharjah to Khurus, and Abdullah Salim immediately withdrew. Abdullah Salim had been in close touch with Turki and visited him at Buraimi shortly before

that the Saudi Government still endeavours to maintain and restore to its former state between her and the British Government. This rests entirely with the British Government because the violations and the aggressions taking place are committed by the British authorities and not by the Saudi Arabian authorities.

The Saudi Arabian Ministry for Foreign Affairs takes this opportunity of renewing to Her Majesty's Embassy at Jedda the assurance of their high consideration.

the incident referred to above and had received supplies and money. Abdullah Salim has subsequently reaffirmed his allegiance to the Sultan of Muscat.

3. In view of these facts Her Majesty's Government reject as utterly unfounded the accusations made in the Saudi Arabian Government's aide-mémoire and deplore the language in which they are couched. In referring to Abdullah Salim as an "imaginary Saudi" the Saudi Arabian Government are apparently claiming that they were unaware of the connection between that person and Turki bin Ataishan. Her Majesty's Government are glad to know at least that Turki was not acting with the knowledge of the Saudi Arabian Government; but the fact that Abdullah Salim is not a Saudi (Her Majesty's Government never asserted nor believed that he was) does not alter the fact that Turki was in communication with him, nor does it justify the Saudi Arabian Government in making baseless accusations. Her Majesty's Government will consider themselves free to publish the facts should it seem to them advisable to do so.

4. Her Majesty's Embassy regret to state that further evidence exists of interference by Turki with other members of the Beni Ka'ab tribe and particularly with Obaid bin Jam'a.

5. Her Majesty's Embassy at Jedda take this opportunity of renewing to the Saudi Arabian Ministry for Foreign Affairs the assurance of their high consideration.

SAUDI ARABIAN BUDGET FOR 1953-54

Mr. Furlonge to Mr. Eden. (Received April 14)

(No. 51 E. Confidential) *Jedda,*
Sir, *April 18, 1953.*

My despatch No. 57 E. of the 29th April, 1952 gave some idea of the financial position of Saudi Arabia and contained a copy of last year's budget. I now have the honour to transmit a translation of Order No. 1 on the Saudi Arabian budget for the Moslem year 1372-1373 (1953-54).

2. This year's budget is a typically uninformative document which merely orders that departmental expenditure for the coming year should be the same as those budgeted for the past year. It infers that last year's budget was not adhered to and that the estimated balance was not achieved.

3. As remarked in paragraph 4 of my despatch under reference, it seemed last year extremely unlikely that the Government would devote as much as 100 million rials to the repayment of debts. It now appears that there are still many debts outstanding, though probably not as much as at this time last year. Thus, though it seems that the Government have not kept to their proposed expenditure they have been able to reduce their liabilities; to what extent is uncertain.

4. With the issue of the new budget has come an unconfirmed report of the cancellation of a number of Government projects; some of those for which estimates were included in last year's budget have not been started and it seems doubtful that they will be. The Ministry of Health and perhaps other departments have kept employees unpaid for several months and it appears that two new hospitals which had reached the stage of the drawing board will not now be constructed (despite an increase in the Ministry of Health allocation for last year of about 200 per cent.).

5. The new budget, in contrast to that of last year, was prepared without the assistance of the Point 4 adviser, although he had been given a verbal promise by the Minister that he would be consulted. The first he knew about it was its publication. This was not due to lack of interest on his part but ignorance of Saudi Arabian ways and to his having the administration of the T.C.A. mission on his hands; he had been very busy and not alive to the need of joggng the Saudis into asking his advice. The Governor of the Monetary Agency,

Mr. Blowers, who operates the Government accounts has, however, interested himself in trying to put Saudi finances on a reasonable footing. He has some idea of the financial position of the Government, though he will not divulge it in more specific terms than I have indicated above, and has drawn up an expenditure programme which is, so far as can be discovered, merely a statement of what the Saudi Arabian Government monthly expenditure should be. He has presented this to the Minister of Finance with an explanation that adherence to it will enable the Government to pay off their outstanding debts, due mostly to local merchants and bankers, by the end of August. The Minister of Finance has agreed to try to keep within the sums proposed. Since, however, the Royal Family will undoubtedly make unexpected demands which cannot be refused, it seems unlikely that Saudi Arabia will be technically solvent by so early a date as August. However, if the reported cancellation of Government projects is true it does seem that an attempt is being made to curb expenditure. It is at least hoped that the Saudi Arabian Government will pay off their creditors within the next year or two.

6. There are no budget allocations this year for specific projects, the Ministries themselves being responsible for their internal estimates and for using the money at their disposal as they see fit. This is, in fact, no different from past practice as the number of official cars and semi-official houses indicates. Though this year's budget is more realistic than its predecessor, the result may only be an even smaller proportion of money being devoted to the declared purposes.

I have, &c.

J. M. HEATH
(for the Ambassador).

Enclosure in No. 37

Whereas we had issued a budget circular (under No. 2) for preparation of the 1372-73 (1953-54) budget and whereas the budgets of certain Ministries and departments had to be modified (entailing the loss of much time during the financial year 1371-72 (1952-53)) and whereas after the

issue of the budget circular for the current year it transpired that certain Ministries and departments had not submitted their budgets within the time fixed in accordance with instructions designed to make possible a study of the details of the budgets and to draw up a final document. This procedure is not one used by the Saudi Arabian Kingdom alone nor is it one recommended by the Ministry of Finance itself, His Majesty's wish has now however been issued to us under reference No. 5/1/3/2884 of 16/6/72 (2nd March, 1953) and the following is the text thereof:—

From: Abdul Aziz Son of Abdul Rahman El Faisal to H.E. Abdullah Suleiman, God Preserve Him.
Greetings:

With reference to our orders to you regarding the increases over budgetary allocation, carried out by you in accordance with development requirements and what is deemed necessary for a smooth machinery:

The officials concerned should be informed to adhere to the following:—

1. To consider the budget for the 72/73 (1953-54) on the same lines as it was during 71/72 (1952-53).
2. To allocate the funds for the general items and the projects, according to financial regulations, to meet the State's call for a continuous development and the fulfilment of prosperity desired to the people.

For careful execution and necessary information.

(Royal Seal.)

In view of this the Ministry of Finance are compelled to act upon the budget for the year 1371-72 in so far as concerns Article 1 of the Royal wish.

As regards Article 2, this Ministry is at present fixing credits in connection there-

with consistent with State requirements and the raising of the general standard and taking into consideration the fact that certain over-expenditures in the allowances of the Ministries and departments have been unavoidable. This proves, however, that the control exercised over the execution of budgets has been as strict as possible hence the detection of this over-expenditure before the final submission of account, acceptance of further requests for credits for the budget of 1371-72 will stop from 1st of Rajab (18th March, 1953) and payment of expenses, salaries, wages, &c., will be debited to the new credits which are being prepared in execution of the Royal wish and on the same basis as for the last financial year.

Until such time as the authorities concerned complete their estimates of the amounts necessary for projects and the credits required for the new year:—

1. The Treasury will defray necessary expenditure by Ministries and departments within the limits of the previous credits.
2. The Ministry of Finance trust that they will receive the co-operation of the Ministries and Departments with a view to fulfilling the Royal wish.
3. Responsible officials should see that jobs are completed within the time limit fixed and to keep at the same time, an account of expenditure incurred from the 1372-73 (1953-54) budgets.

I trust that the budget for this year 1372-73 (1953-54) will be more accurate and stable and that it will suit world developments and ensure social security.

Minister of Finance.

1st Rajab, 1372.
(18th March, 1953)

FRONTIER DISPUTE: OUR OFFER TO WITHDRAW OUR FORCES FROM THE DISPUTED AREAS PROVIDED

Sir Winston Churchill to Mr. Pelham (Jedda)

(1)

(No. 410. Confidential) Foreign Office,
(Telegraphic) June 2, 1953

I am not prepared to allow Turki to remain in Buraimi on any conditions which

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limit our present freedom of action. Even as things are I foresee great difficulty in securing the Sultan's agreement to arbitration.

H

2. To give Ibn Saud the "equality" he asks for I am ready to withdraw all repeat all forces from disputed areas, provided Turki and his men are simultaneously withdrawn to Hasa. By "forces" I mean British forces (including Trucial Oman Levies) and forces of the Muscat Government which were moved into Buraimi after Turki's arrival. After this, no new forces will be introduced into the disputed areas by any party pending arbitration. This contract is subject to the concurrence of the Sultan and the Rulers under our protection and will take effect as soon as the Special Agreement on arbitration is signed.

3. I do not wish formally to return to the London Agreement. If the Saudis enquire how we will act after the withdrawal of forces, you should be guided by paragraphs 4 and 5 below.

4. I should hope not to have to restrain our oil companies from continuing operations in the disputed areas. The Saudis must agree that it is to the general good of the inhabitants that the natural resources of the area should be developed. It is understood, of course, that ultimately the continuance of these operations is dependent on the result of the arbitration. We would also be prepared to agree that no arguments before the Arbitral Tribunal should be based on operations subsequent

to the signature of the Arbitration Agreement.

5. Without prejudice to our rights, we are prepared to agree that our Political Officers shall refrain from visiting the disputed areas provided that the Saudi Arabian Government likewise undertake to send no representatives into the areas.

6. I accept the joint statement as enclosed in your despatch No. 61 subject to the two points contained in my immediately following telegram and to the agreement of the Sultan. Do the Saudis expect that the whole of the frontier between Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate is to be determined by arbitration. On the whole this would suit us best. I have not discussed this question with the Sultan, and shall do so as soon as I know the Saudi view.

7. You have done well to bring the Saudis so far towards agreement. You should now try to reach agreement on the basis of this telegram. My second following telegram contains my reply to Ibn Saud's letter of May 11, which you may deliver when and as you think fit. If the first reaction is favourable, you should report at once so that Sir R. Hay can proceed to secure the concurrence of the Sultan and the Rulers under our protection whose position you will, of course, be careful to reserve.

EA 1081/589

FRONTIER DISPUTE: PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL TO KING IBN SAUD IN JUNE 1953

Sir Winston Churchill to Mr. Pelham (Jedda)

(2)

(No. 412. Confidential) *Foreign Office,*
(Telegraphic) *June 2, 1953*

My telegram No. 410 of June 2.

Following is a personal message from Sir Winston Churchill to King Ibn Saud dated June 1953:—

"Your Majesty,

I am obliged to Your Majesty for your friendly message of May 11 which I have studied with the attention it demands. I am impressed by what Your Majesty says on the importance of establishing equality between our two countries in the disputed areas.

True equality will best be established if we both recall our forces. If Turki and his men leave, our forces also shall leave the disputed areas. Thereafter, until the future of the areas has been

decided in the manner agreed, neither of us shall send forces or officers like Turki into the areas, and it shall be a matter of honour between us that neither side shall seek any military or political advantage. We do not need any outside umpires to supervise this agreement, which shall be between friends. Will Your Majesty agree to this? If so, I will at once ask the Sultan of Muscat to accept a similar undertaking for his part.

I am happy to think that we are on the threshold of an honourable agreement which will be in keeping with our friendship.

With my respectful good wishes for Your Majesty's health and the prosperity of Your Majesty's people,

I remain, &c.

WINSTON S. CHURCHILL."

EA 1081/604

No. 39

FRONTIER DISPUTE: DISINCLINATION OF KING IBN SAUD TO WITHDRAW TURKI FROM THE DISPUTED AREA

Mr. Pelham to Sir Winston Churchill. (Received June 11)

(No. 7. Confidential) *Riyadh,*
(Telegraphic) *June 11, 1953*

After reading out the King's message the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs said that the King was really very anxious for a settlement. To create a peaceful atmosphere in the area His Majesty was ready to order Turki to establish friendly relations with the British authorities. He desired to remove the idea that Turki was an aggressor. The King contended that he had no forces or means of threatening anyone there and he would like nothing better than that Her Majesty's Government should accept the above suggestion.

2. My appreciation of the position is that the last thing the King will do is withdraw Turki (certainly not to a vastly greater distance than our forces) nor will he proceed with the arbitration process unless the blockade is lifted. Yusuf Yasin said that this would be dishonourable unconditional surrender. The most they can do is to

recognise that the ownership of the area is in dispute and agree that the boundaries must be fixed by arbitration. They will not completely voluntarily abandon those who adhere to the Saudi flag. They recognise that there are people [group undecipherable: ? in the] area owning geographical allegiance, many of whom have been armed by us. They demand equality of position on the spot until there is an arbitral award. They are quite willing to have neutral disinterested joint observers or a Commission to see fair play or to make judgment [group undecipherable: ? in the] case of complaints. Something of this kind, said the King, is the way to maintain friendship and honour: I recognise that Great Britain is an overwhelming superior force; I have no forces in the area nor do I want to send any. I demand fairness and equality; without this you can [group undecipherable: ? divide] Buraimi, but as your friend I would not advise it.

EA 1081/627

No. 40

SAUDI ARABIAN FRONTIER DISPUTE

Mr. Pelham to Sir Winston Churchill. (Received June 24)

(No. 74. Confidential) *Jedda,*
Sir, *June 14, 1953.*

To fulfil the instructions contained in your telegram No. 410 of the 2nd of June I flew to Riyadh early in the morning of the 7th to resume discussions with King Ibn Saud and his counsellors on the subject of his frontier dispute with Her Majesty's Government. During my previous visit (reported in my despatch No. 63 of the 13th of May) they had insisted that equal status for Saudi Arabia with the other parties in the area under dispute was an essential preliminary to the arbitration which would settle its future. I now presented your offer to establish this equality by withdrawing all forces from the area provided that Turki bin Ataishan and his men were simultaneously

withdrawn to al-Hasa, after which, pending arbitration, neither side would send new forces into the area or allow their political officers to visit it. As I reported in my telegrams from Riyadh at the time, this offer was, I regret to say, unacceptable to the King. The full text of His Majesty's reply to you, the essential of which I reported in my telegram No. 7 of the 10th of June from Riyadh, is enclosed in this despatch. It is clear from this reply and the long talks leading up to it, which I have the honour to describe in the following paragraphs, that King Ibn Saud's stand is that in no circumstances will he withdraw Turki from Buraimi or agree to begin arbitration until the blockade on him is lifted and that if these conditions are met and the process of

arbitration begins he insists that then both parties to the dispute shall have an equal number of forces and officials in the area. While I think he would be willing to rest his demands at this point, in order to meet what he conceives to be our objections, he has also proposed the setting up of a neutral or impartial commission which, whether working in the area or outside it would, during the process of arbitration, investigate and settle local complaints and disputes and keep the peace between supporters of both sides. The King's counsellors made it clear to me that His Majesty was not to be moved from this attitude, nor indeed were they to be persuaded by all my arguments to advise him to move from it. I returned here from Riyadh early in the morning of the 11th of June, however, with the impression that, despite my uncompromising stand on your offer, and whatever might be the eventual outcome, they did not for their part yet consider the door closed to further proposal and counter-proposal between His Majesty and yourself, Sir. On the understanding that Her Majesty's Government have no desire to discard the idea of settlement by arbitration and to hold the position by force except as a very last resort I venture to suggest that, even though you may feel unable to meet King Ibn Saud in the elaborate arrangements he proposes, it is desirable, however tiresome, that we should keep on talking with a great show of our honest intentions. I also feel that everything possible should be done to avoid incidents which cannot clearly be shown to be instigated by Saudi factions. It would also be a good thing if we could categorically answer exaggerated complaints.

2. It emerged early in my first conversation with the King's foreign affairs counsellors, Sheikh Yusuf Yasin and Sheikh Khalid el Qarqany, a few hours after my arrival, that they feared that a complete withdrawal of forces on both sides would result in uprising and massacre among those rival tribes in the disputed area who support either King Ibn Saud or the Trucial Rulers and who have been aroused by the local events of the past year. This concern for security in the area in the event of a complete withdrawal of forces was emphasised again and again in all my talks with the Saudi representatives. In answer to this argument I made it clear that you wished primarily to get at the root of inter-tribal rivalry by removing all possible sources of local friction and irritation while arbitration was going on, and that complete withdrawal of forces was surely the best way to achieve

this. It was the presence of forces in the area that had led up to the present situation, and what was needed was a permanent settlement by the definition of the boundary. The Deputy Foreign Minister, while reaffirming his Government's acceptance of the principle of arbitration on this issue, was not prepared to believe that with a complete withdrawal of forces security in the disputed area would be stable while arbitration was going on. Sheikh Yusuf Yasin thought that, on the contrary, withdrawal would only encourage lawlessness; but, whatever the detailed implications of your proposal, he could naturally not give anything more than these personal views on it until I had disclosed your message to King Ibn Saud.

3. I was granted an audience of His Majesty that afternoon and found him looking no more frail than usual, despite the rigours of his strict day-time fast throughout the month of Ramadan. When, after cordial greetings on both sides, I spoke of your desire to meet His Majesty in the matter of equality by withdrawing all forces on both sides in the disputed area, the King interrupted me to say he had no troops there so had nothing to withdraw. To this I answered that your proposal was that all forces, political as well as military, should be withdrawn; this would remove the source of irritation and friction between our two Governments and give equality with honour. The interpreter then read out a translation of your message but when he reached the reference in it to the Sultan of Muscat the King cut him short and said, peevishly and with apparent lack of understanding and with some heat, that he did not recognise the Sultan of Muscat in this matter. I replied to further lengthy remarks in this vein by making it clear to the King that you proposed to approach the Sultan to get him to withdraw his forces also. There was no question of His Majesty having to deal with him.

4. At this point the King beckoned to the Crown Prince, the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Yusuf Yasin, Sheikh Khalid el Qarqany, and the Minister of Finance, Abdullah Suleiman—who until then had been seated at the side of the audience chamber—and all four approached His Majesty and sat on the floor at his feet. Thereafter the King spoke with repeated looks to them for approbation of his words. When your message had been read right through he said it was true he wanted equality in the area and he was glad to know that you, Sir, held the same view, but for

his part he had only a Governor in Buraimi whom he had to keep there to ensure that his people were fed. He had no troops in the area: only Britain had these. His Majesty reiterated nevertheless his desire for friendship and good relations with Her Majesty's Government and bade me discuss the matter further with his counsellors and come to an agreement with them. I spoke to him of your own wish to remove friction by a complete withdrawal of forces and said I hoped that His Majesty for his part would agree to your proposal. Patting my hand, the King ended the audience by repeating several times over his continued friendship for Britain and his earnest desire to see the former good relations between our two countries restored.

5. Despite the King's expressions of friendship, and although of course he had not then had time to study your proposal with his counsellors and give me his views on it, it was evident during the audience that he bridled at any suggestion of withdrawing Turki. The same evening, after breakfast with him at sunset, the Crown Prince confirmed this impression. The Deputy Foreign Minister was also present. The Crown Prince wanted to know just what Her Majesty's Government had in mind by a withdrawal of all forces, and I replied on the lines of your instructions. The Emir Saud said he did not doubt that Her Majesty's Government would keep their word. What worried His Majesty and himself was that such an arrangement did not seem to be equality with honour in view of the disparity in the distances of withdrawal of forces on the respective sides. He was not here concerned with honour as between Britain and Saudi Arabia but between His Majesty and the tribes in the disputed area who had publicly owned allegiance to him. The King's honour would be stained before all his subjects if he did not at once give help to those in the area who might seek it if they were left at the mercy of rival tribes; and by withdrawing Turki he might precipitate attacks on his people and then not be in a position to give this help. Moreover, withdrawal of Turki over the hundreds of miles to al-Hasa would make it appear that the King was abandoning his people, whereas the forces of the other parties in the dispute would be withdrawn only a short distance from the area.

6. I replied that the logical, and indeed the only conceivable place to which forces on both sides should be withdrawn, was their own respective undisputed territory. Any half-measures would only lead to a

continuance of the complaints and counter-complaints which had been exacerbating the situation on the spot for the past months. I emphasised that your proposal was intended to obviate these in the future, and I hoped the Saudi Arabian Government would see their way to accepting it and thus allow the arbitration tribunal to get down to work without delay. I gave my opinion that the Saudi fears of trouble among the tribes in the event of a complete withdrawal of all our forces were exaggerated. In any case both sides could surely be expected to restrain and pacify their supporters in the area by informing them through the proposed joint public statement that the future of the area was being settled by arbitration, and that nothing would be settled by local skirmish. This statement would explain the withdrawal, and since it would be part of the withdrawal undertaking that neither side would bring new forces into the area, the question of re-entry to help tribes on the respective sides would not arise.

7. This point, however, was clearly one of major concern to the Saudi side, and the Deputy Foreign Minister was not slow to raise it at the first of my two long meetings with him next day. Before that, however, Sheikh Yusuf Yasin asserted that your latest message appeared to supersede the proposals in your earlier one and to bring up again a proposal already rejected by Saudi Arabia—namely, withdrawal. I said that your earlier message had been clearly understood by his Government at the time. It was to the effect that both sides should go straight into arbitration and leave the position on the spot as it was, it being understood that neither side should take advantage of that position. In reply to that message King Ibn Saud had said he wished to revert to a position which virtually renewed the standstill agreement which had proved so unsuccessful. This, I said, was not acceptable to Her Majesty's Government. You were prepared either to go into arbitration leaving the position in the area as it now was, or (in order to meet His Majesty's desire for equality) to take all forces away on both sides and then go ahead with arbitration. All this was of course subject to the agreement of the Rulers concerned, which Her Majesty's Government would hope to obtain as soon as they had come to agreement with the Saudi Arabian Government.

8. From this and the following discussion with the counsellors it emerged that the Saudi concern for tribal security in the area after a complete withdrawal was

bound up with their views on the earlier standstill agreement with Her Majesty's Government. Sheikh Yusuf Yasin launched into the first of several tirades in which he bitterly condemned the alleged abandonment of this agreement by Her Majesty's Government. I strongly refuted these accusations whenever made, and listed time and again the omissions and commissions on the Saudi side which had stultified the standstill agreement almost as soon as it was signed. However, the Minister was not prepared to admit the United Kingdom case, and said that the Saudi Arabian Ambassador in London had been instructed to notify you that, whatever Her Majesty's Government might assert to the contrary, his Government still regarded the agreement as being in force and as having been contravened by the United Kingdom. After this experience, Sheikh Yusuf said, it was too much to expect his Government (even if they took your word of honour regarding withdrawal) not to be full of doubts about what would happen if there were tribal fights in the area and no Saudi help within several hundred miles. Both sides had a moral responsibility towards their respective adherents who would remain in the area. I replied that, speaking personally, I thought both our Governments could surely be expected to consult together if necessary if any really serious situation arose in the area—a contingency which in any case I thought remote. It was hardly to be expected that if both sides gave an undertaking to withdraw either of them would take individual action in the area after withdrawal without consulting the other. In reply to a question in this connexion by the Minister I pointed out that it would be for the arbitration tribunal to arbitrate, and not to police the area.

9. Up to this point the Saudi representatives had given me no clear indication of their final attitude to your proposal, though I suspected from my talk with the Crown Prince that it would be unfavourable. Yet neither had they made any counter-proposals. At my next meeting with them, however, the foreign affairs counsellors advanced the suggestion that there should be some kind of neutral or impartial body actually in the area during arbitration to investigate and settle local complaints and disputes and keep the peace between supporters of both sides. This body, they said, would be in addition to the arbitration tribunal; and it seemed clear that they saw in this suggestion a way round the objection to using the tribunal as a police

body. I gave my opinion that all this machinery seemed rather too heavy for the process we wanted to set in motion, and that complete withdrawal would be an easier and quicker solution. However, the counsellors were not to be put off their argument that the King's honour was indissolubly bound up with local security, and in the event this attitude was maintained in the King's answer to your message, which was handed to me at my meeting with the two counsellors late in the evening of the 9th of June.

10. The King's message having been read out to me by the interpreter, Sheikh Yusuf then repeated an informal statement which had just been made to him by Ibn Saud himself. It was to the effect that His Majesty was really very anxious to reach a settlement with Her Majesty's Government and create a peaceful atmosphere in the disputed area. To this end he was ready to order Turki to establish friendly relations with the British authorities there so that the inhabitants should see clearly that the Saudis had no aggressive intentions. This could be done, if Her Majesty's Government agreed, during the period when the dispute was being put to arbitration on the basis of His Majesty's message to you. The King had no forces in the area and no means of threatening the inhabitants; nor indeed would he want to threaten them. He would like nothing better than that Her Majesty's Government should meet him in his desire for a settlement, but if they would not accept his proposals they were at liberty to burn Buraimi or attack it or do what they wanted to it—though, speaking as a friend, His Majesty would not advise that. When I expressed surprise at such an emotional statement and said I hoped the counsellors would assure the King that Her Majesty's Government had no such intentions on Buraimi, Sheikh Yusuf replied somewhat lamely and, I thought, apologetically, that he was sorry to have to use such terms but these were His Majesty's final words and he was under instructions to convey them to me informally.

11. My last formal discussion with the counsellors concerned the joint public statement on arbitration. On this I obtained Saudi agreement to the first point in your telegram No. 411 of the 2nd of June but confirmed that their view on the second point was as you presumed, and so did not press for the additional phrase. Thereafter I had an informal after-dinner talk with Sheikh Yusuf a few hours before

I flew back to Jeddah at dawn on the 11th of June. In the course of this (as already reported in my telegram No. 177 of the 11th of June) he enlarged on his idea of a peace observation commission, strengthening his case for it with a list of further local incidents which I have transmitted to you as my despatch No. 77 of to-day's date. It is clear from what the Minister told me, however, that Ibn Saud wants equality in numbers on the ground, or at least a reversal to the position obtaining under the standstill agreement, even if such a commission is set up. Turki is the symbol of Ibn Saud himself in the area, and for the King to remove him would be to proclaim that he was abandoning his people there.

12. As I had the honour to report in my telegrams Nos. 7 and 8 of the 10th of June from Riyadh, I stuck firmly to my brief and gave the Saudis no cause whatever to think that you would modify your position. I emphasised the generosity of an offer of withdrawal which involved a far greater concession on our side than on theirs. But they for their part held just as stubbornly to their idea of equality and professed to wonder why, if Her Majesty's Government are so confident that an arbitral decision will give justice to all parties, we feel obliged forcibly and unilaterally to continue to dominate the area in dispute. The obvious reply—that Turki unrestrained would do his best to suborn the local inhabitants—would only have produced firstly denial and secondly an unanswerable *tu quoque*, and I therefore refrained from making it. While in this regard I see less right on the Saudi side than on ours, I feel sure that their fears regarding tribal war in the event of a withdrawal of all forces may be genuine—though I was of course careful to argue the contrary with them. King Ibn Saud's honour before his people is an essential factor in these fears, a factor which I do not think should be underestimated when his reply to your message is under consideration. It is all important in any tribal community and I venture to suggest that if some means could be devised of safeguarding it in relation to security in the area—possibly on the lines of the so-called peace observation commission suggested by the Deputy Foreign Minister—there might be some slight hope of persuading Ibn Saud to go into arbitration while leaving things on the spot as they are. But I am not at all optimistic since it would be too easy for the Saudis to insist that we should have as much faith

in the commission as they have. In any case I can see little hope of agreement with the King until the blockade on Turki is lifted, however elaborate of otherwise the rest of the arrangements may be.

13. I am sending copies of this despatch to the Political Resident at Bahrain and Her Majesty's Consul-General at Muscat; to the heads of the B.M.E.O. at Fayid and the United Kingdom Delegation at New York; and to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Washington.

I have, &c.

G. C. PELHAM.

Enclosure to Jeddah Despatch No. 74 of June 14, 1953

Translation

Text of personal message from His Majesty King Abdul Aziz al-Saud handed to His Excellency Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador in Riyadh on the 27th of Ramadan 1372 (9th of June, 1953), to be communicated to the Right Honourable Sir Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, in reply to his personal message to His Majesty

Your Excellency,

It gives me pleasure to share with you the feeling of happiness which you expressed when you said we were on the threshold of an honourable agreement in keeping with our friendship. Everyone who has followed my career knows that it has been my constant endeavour to create the strongest kind of friendly relations with Britain, and it never occurred to me that any problem between me and Britain would reach the proportions which the frontier dispute has reached.

2. We have covered ground in the direction of attainment of a solution of this standing problem by referring the dispute to a neutral and impartial body. Your Excellency has agreed with me that we, and the British Government and those in whose name they are acting, should be in a position of equality in the disputed areas. I welcome any practical proposal which will ensure this equality.

3. In your message delivered to me by Her Majesty's Ambassador on the 7th of May, 1953, you proposed that the position in Buraimi should remain on the basis of an exchange of word of honour ("No

advantages are to be taken by either side in the military position; and Turki bin Ataisnan will be supplied from the local market in Buraimi): thus he was bound.

4. I am grateful to your Excellency for taking into consideration the remark in my message of the 28th of Sha'ban 1372 (12th of May, 1953) in reply to your Excellency's proposal. Your Excellency has now agreed that that proposal of yours does not ensure equality between us, and has now proposed that all forces should be withdrawn and that no third party should intervene in the execution of the pledge of honour between us.

5. If your Excellency will carefully examine the form of the proposed withdrawal you will find that it does not place the two sides on an equal footing, for we are asked to withdraw Turki and the few men with him to al-Hasa, a distance of over 700 kilom. from Buraimi, while the British forces will withdraw to an undetermined distance probably not more than 50 kilometres.

6. We have no guarantee that the other forces will not return for reasons which they might create in the name of security or the preservation of life or any reason they see.

7. Moreover, security will naturally be unbalanced after the incidents which have occurred and have caused bitterness. We, being far away, will not be in a position to fulfil our obligations to protect our subjects; whereas the other forces will be nearby.

8. Furthermore, it was implied in the standstill agreement signed in Riyadh by Her Majesty's Ambassador and our Foreign Minister that the honour of both sides was bound up with the implementation of its provisions, yet this agreement was abolished unilaterally on the part of Britain on the basis of a judgment issued by Britain herself to herself; and there was no third party to say who the wrongdoer was. So how can we repeat the situation without setting up over us an arbitrator who will ensure that neither party delivers judgment independently against the other?

9. I would like to assure your Excellency that I am extremely anxious to end this problem between me and Britain in a friendly manner. The withdrawal of bin Ataisnan—who, with his men not exceeding forty, does not constitute any warlike or military threat—together with the withdrawal of the other forces, will result in massacres among the inhabitants themselves after the known incidents which have occurred.

10. I therefore request that your Excellency reconsider the position on the following basis:—

(a) that the joint statement as agreed with Her Majesty's Ambassador should be finally authorised;

(b) that instructions should issue from your Excellency to the existing British forces to lift the present blockade on Buraimi, and that Turki bin Ataisnan and his men and the people of Buraimi should be free in their supply and movement, as formerly;

(c) that when the arbitral body begins its work we both undertake to have an equal number of officials in that area and prohibit any increase in their number or their activities, and the excess of forces over an agreed number of forces shall be withdrawn;

(d) that provocative actions on all sides shall cease, and the neutral body shall have the right to decide on all contraventions by either of the two parties.

11. I assure your Excellency that our sole aim in this is to reach a fair and honourable solution which will preserve security and protect the rights of all parties.

12. If as a result of your Excellency's efforts the agreement of the British Government is obtained to this, it will be a happy day for us when we begin to carry out what we have agreed upon for the attainment of a solution to this problem.

With best regards,

FRONTIER DISPUTE : MESSAGE FROM KING IBN SAUD TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Sir Roger Makins to Lord Salisbury. (Received June 30)

(No. 1384. Confidential) *Washington, June 29, 1953.*
(Telegraphic)

The State Department (Jernegan) told a member of my staff to-day that the President's message was delivered to King Ibn Saud on June 27 and that it was well received.

2. The State Department were accordingly somewhat dismayed to receive a telegram conveying a message from the King to the President dated June 28 to the effect that the King had just received from Turki in Hamasa a report dated June 27 that seven armoured cars and some aeroplanes had attacked the village of Nuweiji belonging to the Beni Ka'ab for seven hours killing a number of people. (Yusuf Yasin told the United States Ambassador the number was believed to be eight.) The message then alleges that the British commander issued a warning that if the village did not surrender within fifteen hours, he would burn all the houses. After asserting that the Beni Ka'ab owe him allegiance, the King requests "American mediation" to stop such incidents in any way the President may consider effective.

3. Jernegan said the State Department were unable to locate on the maps available to them the village of Nuweiji but according to the Saudis it lies on the track between Sharjah and Buraimi.

4. Jernegan continued that, as we knew, the State Department tried to avoid a mediatory position, nevertheless they were concerned in the general context of the Buraimi question lest this or other incidents lead to a breakdown in the chances of settling this dispute. Moreover, this was an official message to the President to which a reply would have to be sent. The State Department would accordingly be grateful for any information concerning the facts of the incident and the reasons which led to it.

5. Jernegan added that from reports reaching them the State Department were not entirely happy about the way negotiations towards arbitration were proceeding and said he thought it likely that Bedell Smith would probably wish to discuss the question with me within the next day or so. I do not know exactly what line he will take but you will doubtless let me know if there are any particular points you would like me to put to him.

FRONTIER DISPUTE : DISAGREEMENT ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PRIOR CONDITIONS TO ARBITRATION

Lord Salisbury to Sir Roger Makins (Washington)

(No. 2189. Confidential) *Foreign Office, June 30, 1953.*
(Telegraphic)

Situation as regards prospects of settlement is as follows. The Saudis have agreed in principle to arbitration, and it is unlikely that there will be difficulty, either with the personalities or the machinery, for this process. There is, however, disagreement on the establishment of prior conditions to arbitration.

2. Trouble arises from the continued presence of Turki in Buraimi. The State Department must realise that his arrival

there in August 1952 was an outrageous piece of claim-jumping by the Saudis, which would not have been tolerated locally but for the fact that Turki bought himself a welcome with great liberality. He was saved from destruction by Muscati tribes, when in the interests of peace we intervened in October 1952 with the Sultan of Muscat. It is true that he was confirmed in his position by the Buraimi Standstill Agreement, but this was intended to be temporary, and he was under an obligation to cease his subsidies to the tribes, and restore the

situation to normal. In fact, he did not, and many of the local tribal leaders acquired a vested interest in his remaining. Our acquiescence in the position was misunderstood by our friends since Turki openly continued to intrigue with and suborn the tribes. To leave Turki unchecked in Buraimi became impossible. On April 2 we resumed our freedom of action in the disputed areas and imposed a blockade on Turki. As a result, though also thanks to very helpful support from the United States, the Saudis accepted arbitration in principle.

3. Since April 2 we have made two offers to the Saudis designed to create reasonable conditions before the arbitration tribunal starts work:—

- (a) In May we suggested that the arbitration should take place with our troops in their present positions with the blockade on Turki lifted to permit purchase of supplies. No advantages would be taken by either side in the military position;
- (b) In June we offered the withdrawal of our troops from the disputed areas provided the Saudis withdrew Turki from Buraimi.

The Saudis have rejected both these offers and propose instead that the blockade on Turki should be lifted now and that as soon as arbitration is started we should equalise the forces of the two sides in disputed areas. This would leave Turki in position; moreover, either we should have to withdraw the

bulk of our forces or the Saudis would have to send further forces in. The Saudis have also proposed a neutral commission to supervise the situation in the disputed area during the period of arbitration.

4. The establishment of Turki in Buraimi was an aggression against the rights of the Rulers whom we protect or in whose interests we are authorised to act. His activities have disturbed the traditional pattern of tribal allegiance and introduced an element of disaffection and of competition for tribal favour which was absent before. It would be manifestly unjust if Turki remained in Buraimi and the Saudis reaped the benefit of his unscrupulous behaviour. If Turki stays in Buraimi we must maintain our present positions in order to counter-balance the effects of the activities in which he has improperly engaged since his arrival and which to our knowledge still continue. The Rulers would interpret our withdrawal, if Turki was permitted to stay, as a capitulation to the Saudis. No further value would be attached to the British connection throughout the Trucial Coast and the process of arbitration would be meaningless since there would be an immediate scramble amongst the tribes to get on to the Saudi bandwagon. It would in any case be difficult, if not impossible, to persuade the Sultan of Muscat to accept arbitration so long as Turki remained entrenched in what he regards as Muscat territory.

EA 1081/689

No. 43

**FRONTIER DISPUTE : WARNING TO SAUDI ARABIAN GOVERNMENT
THAT THE ROAD TO BURAIMI WILL BE KEPT OPEN**

(No. 215) *Jedda,
July 1, 1953.*

Her Britannic Majesty's Embassy present their compliments to the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and, on the instructions of Her Majesty's Acting Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, have the honour to inform the respected Ministry as follows:—

- (a) on the 19th of June a caravan including seventeen armed men forced its way into Hamasa after firing on a sentry who challenged

them. One Muscat soldier was killed by fire from within Hamasa. A British Political Officer was able to prevent tension from getting out of hand by negotiating with a representative of Turki bin Ataishan an agreement that neither side would fire except in self-defence.

- (b) On the 23rd of June a post set up by Obaid near Mahadha opened fire ineffectually at a levy patrol proceeding to al-'Ain. On the same day some of Obaid's men fired on the

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**ARABIAN PROTESTS AGAINST THE CONFISCATION OF GOODS
INTENDED FOR TURKI BIN ATAISHAN IN THE VILLAGE
OF HAMASA**

Acting Secretary of State to M. Abdelrahman S. Helaiissi

(Secret)

Foreign Office.

Sir,

September 30, 1953.

I have the honour to refer to the Saudi Arabian Embassy's *note verbale* of the 18th of September concerning incidents in the Buraimi area, and to the further protests, made on the 21st of September, against the confiscation of certain goods intended for the use of Turki bin Ataishan in the village of Hamasa.

Her Majesty's Government refute categorically the suggestion that the measures which they have caused to be adopted in Buraimi involve any form of aggression, or are undertaken with any intention other

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with King Ibn Saud. I am sure you will agree that Saudi Arabia is assuming an increasingly important position in the pattern of our common defence. While recognising the importance of your position in the Persian Gulf, I feel strongly that in the days ahead of us it will be of paramount importance to both of us to have the friendship and confidence of the Ruler of Saudi Arabia.

I judge from your letter that we may not have made sufficiently clear, during our conversations in July, the seriousness with which we view the situation and the importance we attach to finding some means of settling the dispute which would have greater chance of being accepted by the Saudi Government than those you have put forward. I feel that the possible consequences of inaction are so serious that I again urge your reconsideration of our proposals in the light of our understanding of the situation as I have set it forth above. I would add that we feel an obligation to reply as soon as possible to a letter from King Ibn Saud to President Eisenhower which we will delay answering pending further word from you.

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**KINGDOM REPLY TO SAUDI
ARABIAN PROTESTS AGAINST THE CONFISCATION OF GOODS
INTENDED FOR TURKI BIN ATAISHAN IN THE VILLAGE
OF HAMASA**

than to defend the legitimate rights of the Rulers under the protection of Her Majesty's Government. In the note handed by Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Jedda to His Majesty King Ibn Saud on the 15th of September, 1952, Her Majesty's Government protested to the Saudi Arabian Government at the contravention by the Saudi Government of the terms of the 1951 London Agreement which the incursion into Buraimi by Turki bin Ataishan and his retainers constituted; and in the Note presented by Her Majesty's Ambassador at Jedda to the Saudi Arabian Government on the 2nd of April, 1953, Her Majesty's

1

situation to normal. In fact, he did not, and many of the local tribal leaders acquired a vested interest in his remaining. Our acquiescence in the position was misunderstood by our friends since Turki openly continued to intrigue with and suborn the tribes. To leave Turki unchecked in Buraimi became impossible. On April 2 we resumed our freedom of action in the disputed areas and imposed a blockade on Turki. As a result, though also thanks to very helpful support from the United States, the Saudis accepted arbitration in principle.

3. Since April 2 we have made two offers to the Saudis designed to create reasonable conditions before the arbitration tribunal starts work:—

- (a) In May we suggested that the arbitration should take place with our troops in their present positions with the blockade on Turki lifted to permit purchase of supplies. No advantages would be taken by either side in the military position;
- (b) In June we offered the withdrawal of our troops from the disputed areas provided the Saudis withdrew Turki from Buraimi.

The Saudis have rejected both these offers and propose instead that the blockade on Turki should be lifted now and that as soon as arbitration is started we should equalise the forces of the two sides in disputed areas. This would leave Turki in position; moreover, either we should have to withdraw the

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- (a) on the 19th of June a caravan including seventeen armed men forced its way into Hamasa after firing on a sentry who challenged

them. One Muscat soldier was killed by fire from within Hamasa. A British Political Officer was able to prevent tension from getting out of hand by negotiating with a representative of Turki bin Ataishan an agreement that neither side would fire except in self-defence.

- (b) On the 23rd of June a post set up by Obaid near Mahadha opened fire ineffectually at a levy patrol proceeding to al-'Ain. On the same day some of Obaid's men fired on the

You also state that all your information is that, if we urged on Ibn Saud your plan for mutual withdrawal combined with neutral supervision, our advice would be accepted. We, on the other hand, are convinced, on the basis of discussions Ambassador Hare has had with Ibn Saud in which the ambassador unofficially and informally mentioned the possibility of withdrawal, that the Saudis would not accept such a proposal. My own conversations with the King last May have persuaded me that this must be accepted as a fact. During our talks last month I indicated our belief that the King could not be persuaded to move any further on the matter of withdrawal. In view of our understanding of the situation, we do not feel able to urge your plan upon King Ibn Saud.

You will recall that, after your Government proposed arbitration, we strongly supported the principle with Prince Faisal and the Saudi Government. I believe you will recognise that this support was largely responsible for Saudi acceptance of this procedure. Perhaps you were not aware, however, of the strain which our support imposed upon our friendly relationship

with King Ibn Saud. I am sure you will agree that Saudi Arabia is assuming an increasingly important position in the pattern of our common defence. While recognising the importance of your position in the Persian Gulf, I feel strongly that in the days ahead of us it will be of paramount importance to both of us to have the friendship and confidence of the Ruler of Saudi Arabia.

I judge from your letter that we may not have made sufficiently clear, during our conversations in July, the seriousness with which we view the situation and the importance we attach to finding some means of settling the dispute which would have greater chance of being accepted by the Saudi Government than those you have put forward. I feel that the possible consequences of inaction are so serious that I again urge your reconsideration of our proposals in the light of our understanding of the situation as I have set it forth above. I would add that we feel an obligation to reply as soon as possible to a letter from King Ibn Saud to President Eisenhower which we will delay answering pending further word from you.

EA 1081/871

No. 47

**FRONTIER DISPUTE: UNITED KINGDOM REPLY TO SAUDI
ARABIAN PROTESTS AGAINST THE CONFISCATION OF GOODS
INTENDED FOR TURKI BIN ATAISHAN IN THE VILLAGE
OF HAMASA**

Acting Secretary of State to M. Abdelrahman S. Helaissi

(Secret)
Sir,

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September 30, 1953.

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Her Majesty's Government refute categorically the suggestion that the measures which they have caused to be adopted in Buraimi involve any form of aggression, or are undertaken with any intention other

than to defend the legitimate rights of the Rulers under the protection of Her Majesty's Government. In the note handed by Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Jedda to His Majesty King Ibn Saud on the 15th of September, 1952, Her Majesty's Government protested to the Saudi Arabian Government at the contravention by the Saudi Government of the terms of the 1951 London Agreement which the incursion into Buraimi by Turki bin Ataishan and his retainers constituted; and in the Note presented by Her Majesty's Ambassador at Jedda to the Saudi Arabian Government on the 2nd of April, 1953, Her Majesty's

Government reiterated that protest, not only on the ground that Turki bin Ataishan's presence in the Buraimi oasis was contrary to the London Agreement but was, moreover, most unwelcome to the Trucial Oman Shaikhs under their protection and to the Sultan of Muscat. To those protests the Saudi Arabian Government have made no satisfactory response: Turki bin Ataishan is still at Buraimi, and his activities continue. If there has been aggression, it has been on the part of Turki bin Ataishan; and the incidents to which the present Saudi Arabian protest relate are the direct and inevitable consequences of Turki bin Ataishan's unjustified and provocative presence in the Buraimi area. I would add only that in the Note presented to the Saudi Arabian Minister for Foreign Affairs by Her Majesty's Embassy at Jedda on the 1st of July, 1953, it was stated that Her Majesty's Government, while desirous of eliminating incidents and lowering tension in the area in question, would oppose the use of force with force; and that position, I would emphasise, will be maintained.

I turn now to the details of the incidents about which the present Saudi Arabian protests have been made. From the full reports which have reached me about them, it is clear that the facts are as follows:—

During the early morning of the 15th of September a party of armed tribesmen, attempting to enter Hamasa, was intercepted by a patrol of the Trucial Oman Levies, who called upon it to halt. The tribesmen, when so challenged, opened fire on the Levies' patrol, who were thus obliged to defend themselves. Fire was also directed against the patrol from Hamasa. Her Majesty's Government are not aware that any casualties were caused during this first incident, but later in the day a second occurred during which three casualties were unfortunately suffered. On that occasion, a Levy patrol from the village of Jimi was despatched to interrogate

a man making for Hamasa. When called on to stop, he turned and fired; fire from Hamasa was also opened on the patrol, which (again in self-defence) was compelled to return it. After the patrol had returned to Jimi, a force estimated at about 100 men advanced towards it from Hamasa and the defenders of the post, who numbered only seven, were forced to open fire in order to avoid being over-run.

Her Majesty's Government are satisfied that in neither incident did the Trucial Oman Levy forces exceed their duty or their right of self-defence: indeed, the disparity in the numbers involved in the second incident is itself sufficient to prove that the action taken by the Levies was entirely justifiable. While, therefore, Her Majesty's Government regret any hardship that may have been caused to innocent inhabitants of the locality by these incidents, and deeply deplore the loss of life that has occurred in them, Her Majesty's Government are entirely unable to accept any responsibility for them.

As regards the protest that supplies intended for Turki bin Ataishan have been intercepted and confiscated, there is abundant evidence to show that the large supplies he has obtained in the past have been used to further those activities to which Her Majesty's Government have taken exception. The normal life of the inhabitants of the oasis has in no way been interfered with and the residents of Hamasa are able to obtain their normal requirements in the market at Buraimi; but Her Majesty's Government are not prepared to permit Turki bin Ataishan to provide himself with the means with which to tamper with the loyalty of the local tribes. Instructions have been given that the articles confiscated in transit to him are to be sold and that the proceeds of the sale shall be held in safe custody pending a solution of the whole problem.

I have, &c.

FRONTIER DISPUTE: DESIRE FOR SAUDI ARABIAN CONFIRMATION THAT OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE NEW PROPOSAL FOR A SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM IN THE BURAIMI AREA IS ACCEPTABLE TO THE SAUDI ARABIAN GOVERNMENT

Mr. Allen to Shaikh Hafiz Wahba

*Foreign Office,
October 7, 1953.*

Sir,
When I discussed with your Excellency on the 1st October the proposal for the solution of the problem in the Buraimi area which your Excellency had already communicated, as a personal suggestion, to Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Jedda, I undertook to inform you of our attitude to this proposal after certain consultations here.

As the Government of His Majesty King Ibn Saud are aware, the position of Her Majesty's Government in this matter is that they are prepared to submit this dispute to arbitration after the complete withdrawal by both sides of all forces from the disputed area. Since they are anxious, however, to neglect no opportunity of reaching an understanding with the Government of His Majesty King Ibn Saud, they are prepared to examine the new proposal sympathetically provided that your Excellency can confirm that our understanding of its implications is acceptable to the Saudi Arabian Government. I attach a memorandum setting forth that understanding and should be grateful if your Excellency could confirm that this description of the details of the proposal accords with your Excellency's intentions, and meets with the approval of His Majesty King Ibn Saud.

R. ALLEN.

Memorandum

His Excellency Shaikh Hafiz Wahba has made the personal suggestion that the two

Governments should conclude an agreement on the following lines relating to the Buraimi oasis:—

- (a) that the present forces of both sides in the Buraimi oasis should be replaced by smaller, and equal, police forces (not exceeding twelve men) to act jointly to preserve security during the period of arbitration;
- (b) that both sides should undertake not to engage in any political or military activity in the Buraimi oasis from date of this agreement to the conclusion of arbitration; and
- (c) that both sides should undertake not to put any obstacles in the way of the return of the inhabitants of the oasis to the places where they were living on April 2, 1953, unless those persons have previously acted in a manner calculated to disturb law and order and might be expected to foment trouble.

The present proposal relates to the situation in the Buraimi oasis, and will not affect the situation existing in other areas of the Trucial Coast, and of the territory of the Sultan of Muscat and Oman.

It is my understanding that an agreement in this sense would in His Excellency's opinion be acceptable to the Government of His Majesty King Ibn Saud, and that both sides should conclude such an agreement which would be signed and become operative concurrently with the arbitration agreement.

FRONTIER DISPUTE: UNITED KINGDOM REPLY TO SAUDI ARABIAN PROTESTS AGAINST CERTAIN INCIDENTS IN THE BURAIMI OASIS

Mr. Eden to M. Abdelrahman S. Helaiissi

*Foreign Office,
October 17, 1953.*

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to the letter dated the 23rd of September, to the two letters dated the 28th of September, and to the Embassy's *note verbale* of the 7th of October, in which you communicated protests by the Saudi Arabian Government against certain incidents which are alleged to have occurred in the Buraimi oasis.

I have investigated these complaints, and am now able to provide the following information. In the first place, I must state that there is no foundation for the allegation made in your letter of the 28th of September that the British authorities had stated that anyone entering the village of Hamasah would be killed. As they have previously declared, Her Majesty's Government are resolved to prevent visitors from outside the oasis from entering the village and parleying with Sheikh Turki bin Ataishan; but the forces on the spot have specific instructions to prevent access in a peaceful manner, and fire has only been opened when the persons intercepted themselves have first had recourse to firearms, or behaved in a provocative and threatening manner.

As regards the incidents which are said to have occurred on the 20th and 24th of September, Her Majesty's Government are given to understand that, on both dates, the security forces were compelled to return the fire of armed tribesmen who had taken offensive action against the levies when called upon to halt by the occupants of the levy post.

In the first paragraph of the Saudi Embassy's memorandum of the 7th of October, it is stated that the officer in charge of the British security forces in Buraimi warned the inhabitants of Hamasah on the 28th of September to evacuate their village within two hours, and that fire was thereafter opened by the Levies. This allegation is entirely without foundation; no such ultimatum was in fact issued. Nor is there record of any shooting

on that date. As regards the further allegation relating to alleged interference with the occupants of a vehicle travelling towards Dhank and Ibri, I am awaiting a full report on this incident.

For their part, Her Majesty's Government continue to receive reports of violent and provocative conduct by the followers of Sheikh Turki bin Ataishan and by those who are under his control. The following incidents provide evidence of the actions to which that Saudi official appears to lend his support:—

On the 9th of October, at 2330 hours, twenty rounds were fired from Hamasah against a Trucial Oman Levy post, which was compelled to return the fire. It is not known whether casualties were caused. Scars on the trees under which the post is established show clearly the direction from which the fire came. There had been no incidents in any part of the oasis at any time during the previous twenty-four hours to justify this deliberate and entirely unprovoked attack.

On the 10th of October, at 2300 hours, three rifle shots were fired at a Trucial Oman Levy post, which returned the fire. At the same time a Levy patrol was fired upon by two men whom they had challenged. As far as Her Majesty's Government are aware, no casualties resulted from either of these incidents.

Her Majesty's Government are concerned, as they have stated on numerous occasions, to preserve peace and tranquillity in the oasis. Their efforts to this end are continually being frustrated by the actions of Sheikh Turki bin Ataishan's followers. They must therefore once more record their view that responsibility for the breaches of the peace which have occurred lies with Sheikh Turki bin Ataishan; and they register a strong protest against the failure of the Saudi Arabian Government to restrain him from such provocative conduct.

I have, &c.

ANTHONY EDEN.

BURAIMI DISPUTE

Oral Message from His Majesty the King communicated to the British Ambassador, Mr. Pelham, in Riyadh on October 23, 1953

"His Majesty the King is very anxious to terminate the existing problem in Buraimi and its vicinity as soon as possible, in maintenance of the friendship existing between the two countries and in order to prevent what may trouble it because of what has taken place in Buraimi and its vicinity. The agreement which has been reached for quietening down this situation in the Buraimi region and its vicinity cannot eliminate the anxiety existing in His Majesty's heart unless a speedy solution to this problem is found. His Majesty has no doubt about his rights in the Buraimi region and its vicinity from the legal and historical point of view. Nevertheless, His Majesty

lays that aside for the time being and would like to propose the formation of a tripartite commission to go to the whole region and carry out a general plebiscite the lines of which will be determined before the starting of the plebiscite. In the light of the result the frontiers will be decided in the Buraimi region and its vicinity. Owing to the fact that His Majesty is well aware that the United States of America is a friend to both parties His Majesty proposes that the Government of the United States should be the third party in the proposed tripartite commission which will be formed of a Saudi party, a British party and an American party."

Message handed to His Excellency the British Ambassador, Mr. Pelham, in Riyadh on Friday, October 24, 1953

It is the view of the Saudi Arabian Government that the procedure for the solution of the problem of the disputed frontiers which was discussed in London is that the method of solution should be bound by the bases which were laid down in Article 1, paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (f) of the minutes prepared with the agreement of both sides in London on the 14th August, 1951, conforming to the 21st Zil Ki'dah

1370. The Saudi Arabian Government are prepared to start immediately to solve the difference on that basis, it being understood that the subject of the difference on the frontiers is independent of the difference which has arisen in the Buraimi region and its vicinity for the solution of which a special proposal has been submitted by His Majesty King Abdul Aziz on the 23rd October, 1953, conforming to the 4th Safar 1372.

Translation of Extract from Um al Qura of March 6

The British Government have communicated their agreement to the following principles:—

1. Stop R.A.F. flying over Buraimi.
2. Impose no restrictions on ordinary supplies which have no military significance sent to any of the parties in the Buraimi Oasis subject to the Regulations enforced hitherto.
3. Impose no restrictions on normal movements of individuals.
4. The Passport Regulations will not be applied in the Trucial Coast Sheikdoms in a way restricting the liberty of the normal movements of individuals.
5. All parties will cease from provocative actions.

6. Turki bin Ataishan shall stop all propaganda including (flying of a flag) and the issuing of Nationality documents.
7. Life is to revert to its normal course, *i.e.*, that which existed before the arrival at the oasis of Turki bin Ataishan. (No expenditure of large sums of money and lavish entertainment which is inconsistent with custom is to take place.)
8. The Parties in Buraimi at present may remain there, but in their present condition only. No party is permitted to send reinforcements to the oasis.

The Sultan of Muscat has announced that he is going to comply with the foregoing conditions.

PROTEST BY HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT AGAINST THE INFRINGEMENT BY THE SAUDI ARABIAN GOVERNMENT OF THE RIGHTS OF BURAIMI CITIZENS

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mecca.

The Saudi Arabian Ministry of Foreign Affairs present their compliments to the British Embassy and, with reference to the latter's *note verbale* No. 358 of 5th November, 1953, have the honour to say they regret having received the aforementioned communication from the British Embassy at a time when the two Governments are working for a solution to the Buraimi question.

The Saudi Arabian Government do not accept this protest by the British Government against the conduct of His Majesty's legitimate emir, Turki bin Ataishan, Emir of Buraimi. They also decline to accept the protest about Turki bin Ataishan's statement concerning the nationality of

Sultan bin Mohammed and Mubarak bin Obaid of the people of Qatar, followers of Sayid ibn Sultan al-Darmaki, since the area as a whole is regarded by the Saudi Arabian Government as belonging to them (the Government), and all its inhabitants their subjects.

The Saudi Arabian Government earnestly request the British Government to stop the repeated aggression which is taking place in that part of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, including protests such as the present (British) one, which is not based on rights but is a blatant aggression on the sovereignty of the Saudi Arabian Government.

The Ministry take this opportunity to express their high consideration.

(No. 358)

Her Britannic Majesty's Embassy at Jeddah present their compliments to the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and have the honour to draw the attention of the respected Ministry to the fact that the Saudi official unlawfully established in Buraimi, Turki bin Ataishan, has in the past addressed letters to the Governor of Hasa in terms to which Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom are compelled to take exception.

The embassy have the honour to append to the present *note verbale* a copy of one such communication.⁽¹⁾ As will be observed from the text, the Saudi official describes himself as "Emir of Buraimi," a title to which Her Majesty's Government deny his right, and the assumption of which they consider an infringement of their rights and

of the rights of the Rulers in whose interests they are acting in the present dispute.

In the second place, the letter, which refers to two persons named, Sultan bin Mohammed and Mubarak bin Obaid, describes them as Saudi subjects. Her Majesty's Government are informed that the two persons in question are residents of the village of Qattarah in the Buraimi Oasis, and that they belong to a tribe which owes allegiance to Sheikh Shakhbut bin Sultan, the Ruler of Abu Dhabi. They cannot therefore be accurately described as subjects of His Majesty King Ibn Saud.

Her Britannic Majesty's Embassy take this opportunity to renew to the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Foreign Affairs the assurance of their highest consideration.

*British Embassy, Jeddah,
November 3, 1953.*

(1) Not printed.

DEATH OF KING IBN SAUD

Mr. Pelham to Mr. Eden. (Received November 9)

(No. 363. Confidential) *Jedda,
(Telegraphic) November 9, 1953.*

My immediately preceding telegram.

I have received official confirmation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the death of Ibn Saud.

2. The Amirs Saud and Faisal flew from Jedda to Taif this morning. Mecca Radio has announced that Saud has been accepted by the whole Royal Family as King, and that Faisal has been declared Crown Prince.

3. Official mourning is requested in accordance with Ibn Saud's Wahabi principles.

4. Jedda is quiet and goes about its business normally. Some pleasure is expressed at appointment of Faisal as Crown Prince. I do not expect disturbances here or elsewhere in Saudi Arabia.

5. I am seeing Khalid Al Qarqani this afternoon.

EA 1081/1040

No. 53

CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE SAUDI ARABIAN AMBASSADOR ON NOVEMBER 11, 1953

Buraimi

Mr. Eden to Mr. Pelham (Jedda)

(No. 116. Confidential) *Foreign Office,
Sir, November 11, 1953.*

The Saudi Arabian Ambassador came to see me this evening when he said his purpose was to thank me for the call made on him the day before yesterday by the Vice-Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps on the death of King Ibn Saud. His Excellency said that of course he felt this death very keenly for he had worked with the King for more than twenty years. He hoped that I had seen the statement of the Crown Prince on his accession that he wished to settle the Buraimi issue between us. He was aware, of course, that, I knew the Crown Prince personally, and he could assure me that this wish was absolutely genuine.

2. I thanked his Excellency and said that on every occasion when I had met His Royal Highness I had been impressed by his directness and sincerity. The Ambassador continued that he was returning to Jedda in two days' time and naturally he was anxious to contribute to settling the outstanding differences about Buraimi so that we could get to arbitration. But he was quite sure that he could not do this without my help.

3. I said that we were grateful for all that his Excellency had done, and if his advice had only been taken a year ago, when he suggested that both sides should withdraw from Buraimi, we might not now have got into this trouble at all. As it was, I understood that one of the difficulties was concerned with the area of arbitration. I could not understand why the Saudi Arabian Government wished to confine the arbitration to the Buraimi oasis. After all, there was a much wider area of undemarcated frontier, and it seemed much better to settle the whole business at once. As he knew, we would like arbitration on the whole Abu Dhabi frontier and areas north of latitude 22° 30'. If this could be agreed to we might then clear up, once for all, a potential source of friction.

4. His Excellency appeared fully to understand the force of this argument, and I got the impression that he would try to persuade his Government to accept this wider arbitration. On the other hand, we had an unresolved argument on the subject of the posts. He said that it was quite clear in his mind that Turki, and those who were with him in Buraimi, should be withdrawn, and that

their place would be taken by a small force of new men—about fifteen in number. We would also reduce our garrison to fifteen, replacing our men. The important element in this arrangement was, of course, the withdrawal of Turki himself. At the same time his Excellency argued that if the Saudis withdrew Turki in this way then we should withdraw from posts outside Buraimi, which had only come into being on account of Turki.

5. I replied that I was sorry I could not accept this argument because, after all, the Saudis had no force in Buraimi at all, neither officials nor police, prior to September 1952. It was as a result of the arrival of the Saudis that we had established our posts. If, of course, the Saudis were able to withdraw their forces from Buraimi entirely, then we could consider a mutual withdrawal, and this might affect our posts. At any rate, this could be examined; but only if the Saudis withdrew to the *status quo* ante-September, 1952.

6. His Excellency said that he feared such a withdrawal was not possible. The Saudis felt that they had made a considerable concession in their offer to withdraw Turki. If the arbitration were to be widened, this also would be to meet our point of view, and he thought it not unreasonable to hope that in our spirit of friendship we should withdraw our posts outside Buraimi. He concluded that if I were not able to help him in this he feared that his efforts would fail. I said that I was naturally very sorry to hear this and that I was grateful to his Excellency for the efforts which he had made and which I hoped he would continue to make. But I gave him no encouragement to think that we would modify our position outside the oasis itself.

7. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representative at Washington, the Head of the British Middle East Office at Fayid and the Political Resident at Bahrain.

I am, &c.

ANTHONY EDEN.

EA 1081/1068

No. 54

FRONTIER DISPUTE: SAUDI BELIEF THAT ARBITRATION WAS FOR THE OASIS ONLY

Mr. Pelham to Mr. Eden. (Received November 18)

(No. 374. Confidential) *Jedda,*
(Telegraphic) *November 18, 1953.*

I have had two meetings with Hafiz Wahba, at the first of which Khalid al Qarqani was present. I followed the line contained in paragraph 2 of your telegram under reference.

2. I insisted that you, Sir, understood that agreement had already been achieved both on arbitration and the situation in Buraimi and that the latest Saudi demands, reversing their previous agreement, cast doubts on whether they really wished for a settlement. Hafiz eventually said that he must have misrepresented the Saudi attitude to us and that they had understood that arbitration was for the Oasis only. However, on his return he had found some disposition to

meet us on this point and he hinted that the Saudi Arabian Government would agree to extending the area for arbitration.

3. Hafiz said that when he made his personal proposal he thought that outside of the Buraimi area we had at the most only two or three posts on the coastline. Had he known that we had occupied the interior and spread as far west as Khor al Udeid he would not have made his proposal. He felt quite sure the King would not agree to arbitration for the whole of the disputed area until we withdrew our posts. He pointed out on an Aramco map ten posts alleged to be occupied by our forces, and one by our oil company. The implication was that the Saudis objected to all of them. I replied that there could be no question of

our removing them unless there was complete mutual withdrawal from the entire disputed area. Hafiz departed in gloom.

4. Other remarks made by Hafiz were:

- (a) personally he thought that sending Turki to Buraimi was a mistake;
- (b) Saud was more difficult on frontiers than his father. He genuinely

ES 1941/29

No. 55

EVENTS ATTENDING THE ACCESSION OF KING SAUD, TOGETHER WITH SOME REFLECTIONS ARISING OUT OF THEM

Mr. Pelham to Mr. Eden. (Received December 2)

(No. 153. Confidential) *Jedda,*
Sir, *November 24, 1953.*

Since my telegram No. 362 of the 9th of November informing you of the death of King Ibn Saud I have been watching the situation closely and I now have the honour to report upon the events attending the accession of King Saud, together with some reflections arising out of them.

2. Ibn Saud had lain ill at Taif since the beginning of October, and though by the end of that month it seemed that he had surmounted the crisis it was evident that he was still very weak and not likely to last much longer. On the 8th of November the Crown Prince flew to Jedda, where he was received with a large military band and parade. Next morning, on being informed that his father was *in extremis*, he took off immediately for Taif. When he landed he found the airport deserted. As he hurried towards the palace he must have had qualms as to what his reception would be. In the meantime Ibn Saud had died at 10.30 a.m. (not 4.30 a.m. at Riyadh as reported in *The Times* and all other newspapers which I have seen) in the arms of the Amir Feisal. When the Amir Saud arrived at the palace he was met by

wanted a settlement, but feared that there were many who would regard any concession as a sign of weakness. I said that, on the contrary, a reasonable agreement and procedure to arbitration could be represented as a sign of strength.

Feisal and hailed as King. The whole Royal Family then in Taif assembled round the dead body of Ibn Saud. It must have been a remarkable gathering, with princes of every hue and cast of feature yet each of them the descendant of the last great warrior monarch. The future of each of them depended upon the character and ambitions of two or three of their number. Though all must have been aware that the establishment less than a month earlier of a Council of Ministers with Saud as president and Feisal as vice-president had indicated an agreement on precedence, nevertheless it was a dramatic moment. I am told that Feisal stepped forward, took a ring from the dead king's finger and presented it to Saud. The latter thereupon handed it back to Feisal declaring that he was his heir and Crown Prince. The family then acknowledged this arrangement.

3. Feisal immediately flew to Riyadh taking with him the corpse of the dead monarch. There was little ceremony. The body was placed in an ordinary truck and disappeared from the stage of history. Thus Ibn Saud returned to his ancestral home.

4. Meanwhile in Jeddah the telegraph office was flooded. It has recently been announced that the new King has received over 10,000 telegrams from Egypt alone. Otherwise Jeddah had an almost normal day. The shops shut only gradually and not all of the football games for that afternoon were cancelled. The airport was deserted shortly after noon, every plane having been pressed full of princes and notables flying to Taif. But so little occasion was there to fish in troubled waters that many of them returned to Jeddah that same evening. On receiving the condolences of a member of my staff General Ibrahim Tassan merely remarked, "It is a thing."

5. This was the prevalent attitude. There was restrained grief but no surprise and no undue excitement at the sequence of events which had been broadcast by Radio Mecca at noon. The flag over this embassy was the first to be flown at half-mast and I immediately expressed condolences on behalf of myself and Her Majesty's Government, and as doyen of the Diplomatic Corps, to Sheikh Khalid al Qarqani who had taken charge of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Sheikh Khalid left all matters of protocol to myself and the Diplomatic Corps succeeded in acting in unison and with restraint. As soon as King Saud arrived in Jeddah on the 11th of November I was invited to lead the entire Diplomatic Corps in an audience of His Majesty. The brief speech which I made on this occasion was subsequently reported in Arabic by Radio Mecca. The King made a point of bringing Feisal forward in the reception.

6. Immediately after my departure the King began a long series of audiences to special delegations from other Arab countries. Neither the delegation from Bahrain nor that from Qatar called upon me or in any way afforded me facilities for meeting them. The latter was particularly welcome to the Saudis since it was headed by the Ruler. I understand that the arrangements for the visit of the Bahrain delegation were made, on request, by Aramco. The King of the Yemen sent one of his sons. Two delegations have come from Lebanon, one headed by the Prime Minister, the other consisting of twenty-one members of the Opposition. I am told that Jordan sent a member of the Royal Family, but the Syrian delegation was a disappointment, being headed only by the Minister of Agriculture. Considering the subventions he is believed to have received it is considered that President Shishakli was

ungrateful not to come himself. The delegation from Iraq, however, was felt to be not far short of an insult, especially considering that King Saud had himself gone to Bagdad for the coronation in May. In fact, Iraq sent only her ambassador to Saudi Arabia, who is normally resident in Cairo. No mention of an Iraqi delegation was made in the local press. By contrast the Egyptian delegation led by Colonel Nasser was gratifying.

7. However, possibly a more important visitor than any of these was Mr. David Duncan, a staff photographer for *Life* magazine, who arrived on the 12th of November without a visa, and yet with the help of Aramco he was in the King's private apartments in less than two hours. The result is that it is probable that a picture of King Saud will shortly form the cover of an edition of *Life* magazine. Unfortunately for future biographers, Duncan failed to get a picture of all King Ibn Saud's sons gathered together. The extent of the freedom granted to Duncan (who had previously done an acceptable story on Aramco) is an indication of the determination of Americans and Saudis to get on well together. The prospect of reaching an audience of 15 million at a single stroke is gratifying to King Saud.

8. Last Friday there was an interesting gathering at the mid-day prayers in a mosque in the centre of the old town in Jeddah. A detachment of some 200 soldiers lined one side of the narrow street which had been specially levelled by the addition of sand and gravel. The Crown Prince sat in the front seat of the King's car and again it was clear that Saud was taking pains to show how closely his brother was associated with himself. Besides the much-armed burly bodyguard there was a host of notables of several generations. It was particularly interesting to see that Abdulla Saadan, an old crony of Ibn Saud's and a leader of the Muntafiq tribe from the Iraqi frontier, and the redoubtable Saud bin Jiluwi, now returned from his European health cure, both had prominent places. It may have been accidental, but each of them seemed fuller of personality and assurance in Ibn Saud's old style than the younger, bored, Egyptian-aping notables. This symbolises a trend principally noticeable in the Hejaz, but it may also have symbolised the new King's resolution not to do away with the old supports of the throne.

9. Despite all prognostications and wishful thinking, no members of the old régime have yet been dismissed and there has been only one notable new appointment, that of a member of the old guard, to an important new office. Mohammed Surour as Sabban, who is the son of a slave and who is believed to have tried to assassinate Ibn Saud in 1925, has been appointed a Minister of State, a member of the Council of Ministers and Financial Adviser to the King. Mohammed Surour has long since overcome his inauspicious beginnings and has for twenty years been amongst the two or three leading persons in the Ministry of Finance after the Minister. In the last few months he has paid particular attention to cultivating the present King. His influence is expected to be inimical to the Minister, the wily Abdulla Suleiman, who at one time or another has engrossed into his hands every branch of the Government save Foreign Affairs. Moreover, it has long been known that Saud as Crown Prince disliked the Minister of Finance. At the Friday prayers Abdulla Suleiman was a notable absentee and he has scarcely been seen in public since his return to Jeddah. His fall, which would undoubtedly involve that of his family, would almost certainly be popular. Eventually I think it is bound to come, but I believe Saud will not act precipitately. Officials whom he dislikes will rarely be dismissed; rather they will be apt to find their principal functions transferred to others. This, I think, will be Saud's general policy whether or not there is any truth in the story that during his last illness Ibn Saud especially commended Abdulla Suleiman and the head of his Household, Abdur Rahman Tarbishi, to his sons.

10. Saud's position is strong enough for there to have been no need for him to announce spectacular concessions or vast new improvements. He has merely made two or three statements full of pious platitudes looking towards continued prosperity in the future, and has issued a political amnesty which also pardons and frees those imprisoned for debt to the Government only.

11. Since events have so far borne out the opinions on the succession question contained in my letter of the 17th of April, 1952, to Sir James Bowker, Mr. Riches's letter of the 30th of July, 1952, to Mr. Ross and my despatch No. 142 of the 3rd of December, 1952, and in paragraphs 16 and 17 of my

despatch No. 28 of the 3rd of March, I see no reason to revise the assessment of Saud and his position which was developed in those communications. It is, of course, far too early to discern with accuracy what changes there will be as a result of Saud's accession, but I still think they will be "those of evolution, not of revolution or chaos." The most serious problem which faces the Saudi Government is the growing complexity of its own business. Most of the leading members of the Government are out of their depth, but will not admit it. This situation may well force a greater degree of decentralisation upon the country which will not necessarily be beneficial. The central Government will be struggling not so much against separation as against inefficiency and not least its own inefficiency. However, the various possible causes of disturbance discussed in my despatch No. 114 of the 5th of September still seem somewhat remote.

12. The effect of the accession of King Saud upon Anglo-Saudi relations and our position in Saudi Arabia is not likely to be conspicuous. As I have previously remarked on several occasions, it is probable that Ibn Saud was our best friend in this country. I have not been able to discover to whom the new King made the statement reported in *The Times* of the 11th of November. To me he said nothing so explicit and there has been no local publicity for such a statement. I have no doubt, however, that he would like to have the frontier problem settled and to enjoy good relations with us. But I do not consider that, unless sharply prodded, he will go seriously out of his way to achieve either of these objects. I believe that in this matter Feisal is of a like mind. Lacking Ibn Saud's strength of character and overwhelming personal dominance, Saud (and Feisal too) will be more sensitive to adverse opinion both in this country and in other Arab and Moslem States. They will be fearful of appearing to be weak, and may be ready, as Ibn Saud was not, to cry out against Western and Christian intrigue and imperialism.

13. If Saud is prepared to favour any Western nation, his preference will be for America, and I am sure the Americans will do all they can to foster and preserve this attitude. If we are not to suffer in the process we shall have to be very much on the alert and be ready to speak plainly to both Americans and Saudis.

14. In general my provisional conclusion is that Saudi Arabia under her new King will continue to follow trends which were discernible towards the end of the last reign. In the complexity of the modern age personality counts for less than it did when Ibn Saud conquered and created his kingdom. Saud is little more than the shadow of his father. I suspect that events will be

shaped not so much according to his will as by the force of circumstances.

15. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Amman, Beirut, Bagdad, Cairo, Damascus, Bahrain, Taiz, Washington and to the British Middle East Office at Fayid.

I have, &c.

G. C. PELHAM.

SAUDI ARABIA: HEADS OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

Mr. Pelham to Lord Salisbury. (Received July 16)

(No. 82. Confidential) *Jedda,*
My Lord Marquess, *July 1, 1953.*

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith my annual report on the heads of foreign missions in Jedda.

I have, &c.

G. C. PELHAM.

Enclosure in No. 56

Saudi Arabia: Heads of Foreign Missions

(Passages marked with an asterisk are reproduced from previous reports)

Afghanistan

Abdul Hadi Khan Dawi, Minister.
Presented his credentials at Riyadh on the 8th of August, 1952, but has not appeared in Jedda. Believed to reside in Cairo.

Egypt

Al Hussein Al Khatib, Ambassador.
Presented his credentials as Minister on the 14th of August, 1951, and as Ambassador on the 3rd of December, 1952. Formerly Consul in Bombay and Chargé d'Affaires in Karachi. Speaks French and English. Superficially affable and friendly but his relations with me are tempered by the Anglo-Egyptian dispute over the Canal Zone.

France

M. Georges Gueyraud, Ambassador.
Presented his credentials as Minister on the 13th of June, 1949, and as Ambassador on the 17th of September, 1952. He is also accredited to the Yemen which he visits annually.
He previously served in Venice, Zagreb and Ankara and before coming to Jedda was head of the Eastern European section at the Quai d'Orsay. He is ineffective and *protocolaire* but we have very friendly relations and he and his wife are quite representative. Mme. Gueyraud, though inclined to be forceful, is an excellent organiser and has a kind heart which makes her popular especially with the French community.

Indonesia

Radeen Suleiman, Minister.
Presented his credentials on the 31st of March, 1952. Unlike his predecessors is resident in Jedda. A Javanese, born in 1897 and educated at the University of Leiden where he also taught from 1930 to 1945. Returned to Indonesia after independence and held posts in the Ministry of Religion and the Foreign Office. He is a student of oriental languages and literature and also speaks some European languages including poor English. Friendly socially.

Iraq

Najib Bey Al Rawi, Minister.
Presented his credentials on the 7th of September, 1951. Is also accredited to Egypt and does not visit Saudi Arabia.
The legation is staffed by junior secretaries from Cairo normally changed at intervals of six months. The present Cnargé d'Affaires is Kamal Jamad who first arrived in 1951 but has not served here continuously. He is a pleasant and friendly young man, Western in outlook and bitter about conditions in Saudi Arabia. Almost his only function is to look after Iraqi pilgrims to Mecca.

Italy

Il Duca della Regina Capece Galeota, Minister.
Presented his credentials on the 2nd of February, 1953. Is also accredited to the Yemen. His previous diplomatic experience includes pre-war service in Bulgaria. During the last war he was from 1941 Italian Consul-General in Munich (which would imply Axis sympathies) and though he seldom mentions this period it is said that he was a Fascist supporter and his subsequent diplomatic career has apparently been blighted thereby.
Almost his only official interest is the protection of the large Italian colony of artisans and labourers which come mainly from Eritrea. A friendly unassuming man with a sense of humour. The Duchessa is rather heavy but they are both popular and an asset in this small diplomatic and official society.

Jordan

Ali Bey Saydo, Chargé d'Affaires.
*Arrived 1950. A learned and agreeable little man, educated partly in Jerusalem, who speaks good English. Was formerly a school-teacher. Did not distinguish himself during King Talal's visit to Saudi Arabia in 1951 and was then said to be about to be replaced. But he is still here. A friendly and helpful colleague who enjoys good relations with everyone, including the Saudis. His wife is pleasant and will now attend mixed dinner parties if no Saudis are present. (Written in 1952.)

Lebanon

M. Ghaleb Turc, Minister.
Arrived in Jedda on the 28th of October, 1950, and was Chargé d'Affaires until the 27th of May, 1953, when he presented his credentials as Minister. He is a pleasant, hospitable and well-educated man and a very good tennis player and mixes more with the European community than any other Muslim diplomat in Jedda. His relations with the Saudis are good and he is usually well-informed. His wife has led the move against the unwritten law whereby Muslim diplomats' wives, however free in their own countries, avoid public and social appearances in Jedda.

Netherlands

M. Henrick Entrop, Honorary Consul.
*Director of the Netherlands Trading Society at Jedda. He is a slow-moving, solid Dutchman with

considerable experience of Jedda and the Saudis. He is also honorary Belgian Consul. His wife is heavy too but produces an occasional spark. (Written in 1952.)

Persia

Mouzaffar Aalam, Minister.

Presented his credentials on the 10th of October, 1951. A former Minister for Foreign Affairs who is stated to be aged 68 and to have been pulled out of retirement for appointment to Jedda. Holds the personal title of "Ambassador."

*M. Aalam is a charming courtly man with delightful manners. He speaks good Arabic and French and some English. The sole thing that he has done since he came here has been to intervene with the Saudi Government—without success—to try to secure the reconstruction of Shi'a shrines at Medina. (Written in 1952.)

Spain

Don Domingo de las Barcenas, Minister.

*Resident in Cairo. Visited Saudi Arabia in the suite of the Spanish Foreign Minister in May 1952. (Written in 1952.)

Syria

Mustafa Amir Shehabi, Ambassador.

Is also Ambassador in Egypt and has not yet appeared in Saudi Arabia to present his credentials.

The present Chargé d'Affaires is a Second Secretary, Salim al Yafi, who arrived on the 5th of April, 1953. He is a pleasant, scented but rather colourless personality who speaks with pride of his friendship with British colleagues in other posts.

Turkey

M. Kemal Aziz Payman, Minister.

Presented his credentials on the 10th of November, 1952. Pleasant but undistinguished. He speaks Arabic, French and German. Is always most anxious to identify himself with his Western colleagues and is scathing about conditions in Saudi Arabia.

United States

Mr. Raymond A. Hare, Ambassador.

Presented his credentials on the 24th of October, 1950.

*A career diplomat of wide experience in the Middle East, London and the State Department. Speaks some Arabic and French. A believer in the personal touch in dealing with Arabs, in infinite patience and in the value of Western technical aid. He is also a sincere believer in Anglo-American co-operation in Saudi Arabia as elsewhere, though he thinks that this is best achieved by parallel action not in competition, rather than co-operation and collaboration in the sense of presenting an obviously united front to the Saudis.

Mr. Hare is a very agreeable and cultured man who has proved an excellent colleague with whom all matters of common interest can be discussed freely without fear of any confidence being violated or misunderstandings arising. He performs the functions of doyen effectively and has achieved a position of considerable personal respect amongst Saudi notables, including the King. (Written in 1952.)

**CHAPTER III.—THE YEMEN
GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE**

EM 1061/14

No. 57

**DETENTION OF UPPER YAFAI SULTAN: ARABIAN AUTHORISATION
FOR THE GOVERNOR TO TAKE SUITABLE ACTION AGAINST
THE YEMENIS**

Mr. Eden to Mr. Jacomb (Taiz)

(1)

(No. 11. Confidential) *Foreign Office,
(Telegraphic) February 6, 1953.*

The Governor of Aden now considers that sanctions may be inconvenient to Aden and that a threat to break off diplomatic relations would be preferable. I do not believe that the threat (or the fact) of a diplomatic break would seriously affect the Imam.

2. The Governor is therefore being authorised to take what obstructive action

he thinks fit against the Yemenis, on the assumption that he will if he thinks necessary refer for authority here on any particular measure and will keep Her Majesty's Government and you fully informed. My immediately following telegram contains the text of a warning Note which you should deliver at once to the Yemen Government.

**DETENTION OF UPPER YAFAI SULTAN: WARNING NOTE TO THE
YEMENI GOVERNMENT**

Mr. Eden to Mr. Jacomb (Taiz)

(2)

(No. 12. Confidential) *Foreign Office,
(Telegraphic) February 6, 1953.*

Her Majesty's Government deeply regret the terms of the Yemen Government's Note of 14th January, concerning the detention of the Upper Yafai Sultan. They are reluctant to believe that this note represents the final view of the Yemen Government. They cannot accept the allegations of interference made in the Note. The indignities to which a sovereign ruler under their protection has been subjected are of the deepest concern to them.

2. Her Majesty's Government regret that the Yemen Government refuse to recognise the immunity which is possessed in international law by all sovereign rulers.

3. Her Majesty's Government must accordingly again protest most strongly against the actions of the Yemen Government and ask for a reconsideration of the matter. Unless the Sultan is immediately released and allowed to leave Yemen, those actions cannot fail to have serious consequences on Anglo-Yemen relations. The responsibility for these will rest solely upon the Yemen Government.

SIR BERNARD REILLY'S VISIT TO TAIZ

Mr. Jacomb to Mr. Eden. (Received March 11)

(No. 16. Confidential) *Taiz, March 4, 1953.*
Sir,

I have the honour to refer to my telegram No. 55 of 26th February reporting what was said to Sir Bernard Reilly shortly before his departure from Taiz, and to submit the following report on his visit. I shall not comment on the exchanges of telegrams between Sir Bernard and Qadhi al Amri about his method of travelling from Aden to Taiz, but shall confine myself to recording my impressions of what took place while Sir Bernard was in Taiz.

2. Sir Bernard was welcomed at the airstrip by Qadhi Mohamad al Amri who, together with Qadhi Abdul Malik al Amri, the special representative whom the Imam had sent to Aden to accompany Sir Bernard to Taiz, travelled with Sir Bernard to the town. A newly-built bungalow, owned by Shaikh Ali Mohamad al Jabaly, had been prepared for Sir Bernard and I stayed there with him in order to be at hand in case of need. The bungalow, equipped with electricity and running water, proved to be comfortable and it was gracious of the Imam to make these arrangements, about which no complaint would have been justified.

3. After lunch Sir Bernard, accompanied by an official of the Yemeni Ministry of Foreign Affairs went to the Imam's palace to sign his name in the book. This done, Sir Bernard made a tour of Taiz, including an examination of the various parts of the new hospital. Soon after sunset Qadhi al Amri made his official call on Sir Bernard and stayed with him a long time but refrained from mentioning Anglo-Yemeni relations. In the evening I had the honour of entertaining Sir Bernard to dinner in the present temporary legation.

4. At about noon the next day Sir Bernard was received by the Imam who was most hospitable and welcoming and who expressed what I feel sure were sincere feelings of friendship and respect for Sir Bernard. The Imam was in good humour throughout the time Sir Bernard was in his presence, and showed great interest in Sir Bernard's work amongst blind people, a subject which the Imam himself brought up. The lunch, which was attended also by Qadhi Mohamad al Amri, Qadhi

Abdul Malik al Amri, the Imam's two sons-in-law and the Governor of Taiz, amongst others who had all arrived at the same time as Sir Bernard or shortly afterwards, was good and was served in European style which the Imam managed well, though he jokingly quoted Queen Victoria as his authority for discarding his knife and fork when dealing with his chicken. The Imam then departed, perhaps a little abruptly, and Sir Bernard remained with the others guests for only a short while before leaving the palace.

5. In the afternoon Sir Bernard returned Qadhi Mohamad al Amri's call at the Yemeni Ministry of Foreign Affairs and broached the subject of Anglo-Yemeni relations, as reported in my telegram No. 54 of 26th February. In the evening Sir Bernard was entertained to dinner by Qadhi Mohamad al Amri whose other guests included the sons-in-law of the Imam, the Governor of Taiz and the Italian surgeon employed in the new hospital in Taiz. Again an effort had been made to serve a good meal in European style and as a mark of politeness and respect Qadhi al Amri proposed the health of Her Majesty The Queen, which had to be drunk in water of course, to which Sir Bernard replied by proposing the health of the Imam. The next morning Qadhi al Amri visited Sir Bernard to say farewell and to apprise him of the Imam's statements reported in my telegram under reference. Sir Bernard was then accompanied to the airport, and to Aden, by Qadhi Abdul Malik al Amri.

6. My clearest impression of this visit is of the really remarkable efforts made by all the Yemeni officials concerned, from the Imam down, to make Sir Bernard's visit comfortable, enjoyable and memorable. On every possible occasion expressions of friendship and respect were voiced by all the Yemenis with whom Sir Bernard came in contact. These expressions were, I am sure, sincere: there can be no doubt at all of the unique position held by Sir Bernard in the opinion of these people. He is to them the British official who, much more than any other person, has shown great understanding and wisdom in all his dealings with the Yemen in the course of the past twenty or thirty years. His

declared sincere desire for real friendship between the United Kingdom and the Yemen is not doubted for one moment, and his actions over the years are regarded as proof of his aim to create conditions which will make such friendship possible.

7. Should we, then believe that the Imam's invitation to Sir Bernard was made only because he is so highly regarded, and that he was invited as a friend of the Yemen whom the Imam wished to meet for the first time? Or did the Imam have some ulterior motive in issuing this invitation? I feel that if Anglo-Yemeni relations had not been strained while Sir Bernard was in Aden, he might still have been invited to Taiz and, if he had come, would almost certainly have been equally well received. But the fact that relations were, and still are, difficult leads to the suspicion that the Imam did have an ulterior motive in inviting Sir Bernard to Taiz. Perhaps he felt that such a move would force Her Majesty's Government to clear their minds in case Sir Bernard had to answer statements by the Imam on Anglo-Yemeni relations. Perhaps the Imam wished to make a conciliatory gesture but to avoid discussion of Anglo-Yemeni relations. Or perhaps he originally decided to discuss with Sir Bernard the best way of escaping from the awkward situation which he himself had created, and then changed his mind when the moment arrived. It is very hard to say what the Imam may have intended.

8. I must admit that at the time the invitation was issued I felt that this last-mentioned motive was the one which had prompted the Imam to issue it. In the event, however, scrupulous care was taken to refrain from discussing politics: it was Sir Bernard who had to broach the subject of Anglo-Yemeni relations and if he had not, it is more than likely that it would never have been broached. Maybe the Imam and his officials wished to respect Sir Bernard's own position and realised that it would perhaps be improper for anyone on their side to broach this subject, since Sir Bernard held no official position enabling him to discuss this subject direct with the Yemenis. If this was so it would not mean that the Imam and his officials were necessarily surprised when Sir Bernard did broach the subject, though it was, of course, clearly impossible for Sir Bernard to open the subject with his host. That discussions did take place between Sir Bernard and Qadhi Mohamad al Amri, even though they

were more or less unofficial, did give the Imam an opportunity to make some statement through Qadhi Mohamad al Amri.

9. It is this statement, reported in my telegram under reference, which should be the most important result of Sir Bernard's visit. I sincerely wish that I could recommend that the Imam's reputed intention of trying to maintain confidence in Her Majesty's Government be accepted as a clear indication that he will co-operate but I fear that if I did make such a recommendation future events would show that I made a wrong appreciation. I can recall no past action of the Imam pointing to a desire to co-operate. I therefore regret to say that I do not feel able to recommend that the Imam's statement can be considered as sufficient grounds for believing that he will co-operate in future. In saying this I do not for one moment wish to imply that no good has come of Sir Bernard's visit, for I personally feel that the contrary is true. The Imam has met a British official whose sincere desire for Anglo-Yemeni friendship is undoubted, and this should help him to understand that there are others with the same desire. In addition, many Yemenis have also had the same experience and a very large number have seen that the Imam does not dislike all Britons but can be more hospitable and friendly to a Briton than to many other persons. It is apparent, therefore, that Anglo-Yemeni friendship is not, as many Yemenis allege, impossible of attainment. And this visit has also, incidentally, made possible my reception by the Imam.

10. Of further value is the fact that Sir Bernard was able to state views which the Yemeni officials will recognise as the views of Her Majesty's Government. It ought to be clear now to the Imam and his officials that they must believe or disbelieve in the sincerity of Her Majesty's Government's wish for real friendship. They know that their well-being is inevitably affected by the state of Anglo-Yemeni relations and what Sir Bernard has said ought to make it clear to them that they will sometime have to take a decision on whether to co-operate or not. They will, of course, hope to postpone the taking of such a decision for as long as possible, if they do not reciprocate Her Majesty's Government's sincere wish for friendly relations. Hence, if the Imam is not really sincere in his wish for friendly relations it is possible that he will hope that in return for the hospitality which has been

extended to him Sir Bernard will perhaps argue on his side for a less forceful attitude towards him on the part of Her Majesty's Government in London and in Aden, and that he will therefore have no need to take a decision at present.

11. In conclusion I wish to say that it was a very great pleasure and honour to be able to be with Sir Bernard, at his request, throughout the time of his visit. It was a

visit marked by a display of kindness and respect that was both memorable and deserved, but which, after fifteen months in this country, I had not really ever expected to witness.

12. I am sending a copy of this despatch to His Excellency the Governor of Aden.

I have, &c.

M. B. JACOMB.

EM 1011/1

No. 59

YEMEN: ANNUAL REVIEW FOR 1952

Mr. Jacomb to Mr. Eden. (Received April 24)

(No. 21. Confidential) *Taiz,*
Sir, *March 23, 1953.*

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith my Annual Report on the Yemen for the year 1952. I very much regret the delay in the submission of this report, but recent events have rendered it impossible for me, single-handed as I am, to devote the necessary attention to it.

2. I am sending a copy of this despatch to his Excellency the Governor of Aden and to the Head of the British Middle East Office.

I have, &c.

M. B. JACOMB.

Enclosure in No. 59

Annual Report on the Yemen for 1952

The past year saw no weakening of the Imam Ahmad's strong hold over the Yemen. The only visible signs of opposition came from some of the tribal leaders in the north near San'a, from the small tribe, the Dhuraibi, and from the Rasasi Sultan, and these were all dealt with in the usual ruthless manner. From his own point of view the Imam's position improved, in as much as the withdrawal of Qadhi Hussain of Halali from governmental affairs in June marked the virtual end of the efforts of the advocates of progress to persuade him to adopt a more enlightened policy. It was clear that the

only Yemenis who remained close to the Imam were those ignorant sycophants whose opinions were most palatable to him.

2. Though the disappearance of the old régime in Egypt and the advent of General Mohamad Neguib, and other progressive changes in Arab countries, considerably disturbed the Imam, there was no need for him to lessen his tight control of the lives of his people. Nor, by the end of the year, had his hand been forced in any way by the regrouping in Aden in the guise of the Yemeni Unity Society of persons opposed to him, by the progress of Shaikh Abdullah Ali al Hakimi, one of his more vocal opponents, through the Yemeni colonies on the western side of the Red Sea or by the revival of the "Free" Yemenis' propaganda activities in Egypt. Nevertheless, there were some improvements in the material state of the Yemen. A number of European and Levantine doctors arrived early in the year; the new Taiz hospital, lavishly equipped, was opened to patients in June; large supplies of medicines were bought; piped water systems were installed in Taiz; new electric generators were bought for Taiz and Hodeidah; a great many new buildings were begun in different towns; and some effort was made to improve the roads.

3. In the economic field the most spectacular event was the start of the salt works at Salif. Under the direction of Shaikh Ali Mohamad al Jabaly some £250,000 worth of equipment was bought in Germany and

Italy and about fifteen German and Italian workmen were engaged. The installation of this equipment was practically finished at the end of the year. More exciting to the Yemenis was the report that in the course of these operations oil had been found at Salif. But examinations by the representative of an American oil company, by a German geologist and by two other Germans were not encouraging. Even so, an official, but perhaps not really sincere, approach was made in London by the titular Yemeni Foreign Minister to Her Majesty's Government making various proposals to British oil companies. When this approach failed the titular Foreign Minister, and, apparently, the titular Prime Minister, made further approaches in the United States and in Italy and Germany respectively. A further development was the start of a cotton growing scheme on the coastal plain, again under the direction of Shaikh Ali Mohamad al Jabaly. This was not a large scheme, but if pests are controlled it may prove profitable.

4. Anglo-Yemeni relations continued to be dominated throughout the year by problems connected with the Aden Protectorate. Yemeni interference in the affairs of the Protectorate was again considerable, particularly among the Khalifis and the Aulakis from whom hostages were taken. Many Protectorate tribesmen visited the Yemen, with Yemeni encouragement, and received gifts of money. Among them were Khalifis, Aulakis, Hammamis, Amiris, Subeihis and others. The Yemeni Government's frontier officers' interference and correspondence with Protectorate tribesmen was maintained at a high pitch in spite of protests, and he even went so far as to reward some Fathanis who had committed anti-Government crimes in the Protectorate. Among the more outstanding examples of the unfriendly attitude of the Yemeni Government were the failure to prevent the raids into the Protectorate by dissident Beihanis living in the Yemen, which did not cease until the Aden Government and Yemeni Government frontier officers reached agreement in September; the interference in Lahej affairs after the flight to the Yemen of the former Sultan Fadhil Abdul Karim; and the arrest and subsequent conviction and imprisonment in Beidha in December of the Upper Yafai Sultan. On the other hand, in spite of fears to the contrary, nothing came of the Upper Aulaki Sultan's visit to Taiz in February, and the severe restrictions imposed by the Imam in June on visits of Protectorate

tribesmen to Taiz reduced such visits during the second half of the year to a very small number indeed.

5. Other actions of the Yemeni Government which tended to prevent an improvement in Anglo-Yemeni relations were the Imam's refusal to reconsider his attitude towards the flying of the British flag on this legation, his refusal to grant me an audience and the continuance of the difficulties which face me in carrying out my mission; and the continuance of anti-British propaganda in Yemeni newspapers. On the other hand, the Imam felt that Her Majesty's Government had not made any great efforts to improve relations; the tone of the Aden press remained anti-Imamic; the conviction of his unofficial agent for exporting currency notes from Aden without permission was regarded as an unfriendly act in spite of the facts that only a nominal punishment was inflicted and the notes were returned; while the recrudescence of anti-Imamic groups in Aden later in the year was considered to be partially inspired by Her Majesty's Government. The Yemeni Government seemed to take it for granted that favourable treatment should be accorded to them in matters of granting foreign exchange (the total amount granted by the Aden Government in 1952 was a little less than £450,000) and of allowing their aircraft to land in Aden (in spite of the fact that by making commercial flights they were ignoring the terms of the agreement which permitted flights to and from Aden), but they were properly grateful for the gracious reception given by His Excellency the Governor of Aden to the titular Foreign Minister and the titular Prime Minister on their way through Aden in the autumn. They were also much gratified by the attention paid to the titular Foreign Minister during his visit to London in October. It is to be regretted that such friendly gestures were not reciprocated by the Imam.

6. In sum it must be admitted that during the course of the year little or no progress has been made towards the point where it will be possible to appoint a Minister to the Yemen and to enter into negotiations for the establishment of the proposed Frontier Commission, whose task it will be to create a situation where there should be much less likelihood of problems arising in connexion with the Aden Protectorate. That no progress has been possible is perhaps not altogether unexpected, in view of the past attitude of the Yemeni

Government. But it is nonetheless disappointing that the Imam has shown so little sign of even trying to act in a friendly way towards Her Majesty's Government or of understanding that there is a genuine desire on their part for friendship between the two countries. Ill-intentioned persons have, throughout the year, tended to reinforce the Imam's exaggerated suspicion of all foreigners and Britons in particular.

7. In their relations with other Governments the Yemeni Government have maintained their attitude of suspicion and distrust, and have shown no sign of wishing to strengthen whatever ties exist between them and the rest of the world. Though the French Minister to the Yemen visited Taiz and tried to conclude arrangements for the establishment of normal diplomatic relations, and though the French Government went so far as to appoint a Minister to the Yemen to reside in Taiz, the Yemeni Government had not by the end of the year actually agreed to the establishment of a French legation in the Yemen. The Italian Minister, who also visited Taiz, was no more successful in this respect, but he did manage to arrange for the sale to the Yemeni Government of a number of machine guns. The treaty between the Yemeni and Spanish Governments, which was signed early in the year, was to all intents and purposes meaningless.

8. Yemeni-United States relations were much disturbed by the precipitate flight of the American archaeological expedition headed by Mr. Wendell Phillips from Marib in the east of the Yemen in February. This created a very bad impression, and may have contributed to the Imam's decision, taken in July, to suspend the dilatory discussions which had been going on for about two years on the subject of Point IV assistance. The United States Government will not now make any fresh approach on this subject, but will wait for the Yemeni Government to approach them. A further indication that the United States Government are not very impressed with the present Yemeni Government was that the State Department informed the Yemeni Chargé d'Affaires in Washington towards the end of the year that there was no likelihood of the United States Government opening a legation in the Yemen in the course of the current financial year ending in the middle of 1953.

9. Little occurred to change the placid state of the Yemeni Government's relations

with other Islamic Governments. The arrival in May of a few Syrian doctors found by the Syrian Government for employment with the Yemeni Government, was not followed by any further effort to strengthen relations. The Egyptian Minister, who departed at the end of May was not replaced, and later in the year the new Egyptian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia was appointed Minister to the Yemen as well, thus leaving the Egyptian Legation in San'a in the charge of a junior secretary. Though the Yemeni Government objected to permission being given by the Saudi Arabian Government to the Arabian-American Oil Company for exploration in certain parts of the Rub al Khali, some parts of which are claimed by the Yemeni Government, and though many Yemenis were expelled from Saudi Arabia in the course of the year, there was no outward sign of relations between the two Governments being affected in any way. The Yemeni-Pakistani treaty which was signed in Cairo in April did subsequently lead to agreement on the conduct of relations between the two Governments, but there is no question of the Yemeni Government agreeing to the establishment of a Pakistani representative in the Yemen in the near future.

10. Yemeni representation at the Arab League meetings was no more effective or noticeable than heretofore, and in the latter half of the year the Yemeni representative must have found it difficult to sit with the representatives of the more progressive Egyptian and Syrian Governments. Likewise the Yemeni representatives at the United Nations Organisation meetings were no more active than before, though at the Seventh Session the Yemeni delegation was led by the titular Foreign Minister. The Yemeni Government's past failure to take advantage of the many opportunities which this organisation presents for obtaining assistance of one sort or another was again repeated, in spite of the fact that representatives of the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation took the trouble to visit the Yemen in May, July and September.

11. In general, therefore, it must be said that the year has been a dismal one for the Yemen and for anyone interested in the Yemen. The Imam Ahmad has strengthened his position and maintained his policy of isolating his country from the rest of the world. There is a fair indication that he will continue to direct affairs on the same

lines next year, too, and perhaps for as long as he lives, but there is also a glimmer of hope that the visit, which began at the end of the year, of the titular Prime Minister to Europe, the further successes of Shaikh Ali

Mohamad al Jabaly and, perhaps, the criticisms being voiced in Aden may lead to some improvement in the state of affairs next year.

EM 1053/3

No. 60

ANGLO-YEMENI RELATIONS

Mr. Jacomb to Sir Winston Churchill. (Received May 27)(No. 35. Confidential) *Taiz,*
Sir, *May 16, 1953.*

On my departure from this post I have the honour to submit herewith a report on some aspects of Anglo-Yemeni relations during my time at this legation and an account of some impressions which I have formed while at this post.

2. When I left London eighteen months ago to come to this country to open this legation, it was intended that after I had established it a Minister would be appointed. However, for reasons connected with the treatment accorded to me and with the conditions pertaining in Taiz, the taking of a decision on the appointment of a Minister was put off more than once and finally, in the early autumn of last year, was postponed indefinitely. I was therefore left on my own to deal with the initial eighteen months of the life of this legation, and before attempting to review the events in this period I should like to recall the more important difficulties which faced me even before my task began and which were fully appreciated before my arrival in this country. These were: Imam Ahmad's, and his officials' and his people's, inordinate suspicion of all foreigners and almost complete ignorance of the outside world; the fact that, as this was the first European legation ever to be established in the Yemen, I was faced with a government who had virtually no notion of what facilities should properly be accorded to a legation; a strong anti-British feeling stemming from past difficulties between the Yemeni and Aden Governments; and the somewhat demoralising effect of loneliness and isolation in a really primitive country. That all these difficulties would militate against any rapid progress on my part was realised and on

these grounds my duties were to be in the main the rather negative ones of trying to prevent any further deterioration in Anglo-Yemeni relations. More positive efforts to improve these relations would, it was thought, be possible only in the course of some years of diplomatic relations.

3. Coming, then, to the review of the past eighteen months I shall deal first with the status of and treatment accorded to this legation. The first item on the credit side, as it were, was the Yemeni Government's welcome decision to allow me to establish this legation in Taiz instead of in San'a as was originally planned. It was always clear that San'a would be rather unsatisfactory from our point of view, since it was not the seat of Government and was much more isolated than Taiz, and it is now certain that even the very small measure of success which has attended my efforts would not have been possible if I had established the legation in San'a. Secondly, there was the unusually generous attitude of the Yemeni Government in putting at our disposal, free of charge and with free electricity, temporary accommodation for the legation. Admittedly, this accommodation is uncomfortably cramped, but it is the most habitable of all that is available. In addition, the Yemeni Government have been building a new, and pleasant and attractive, building for the legation to occupy. This, again, must be considered praiseworthy on their part, though their dilatoriness in completing it is not meritorious. Again, I have been able to arrange for the normal facilities to be accorded to me in the matters of duty-free imports and the movement of the staff of this legation out of and into the Yemen. Here we now have an unequalled treatment from the

Yemeni Government inasmuch as the legation vehicles are never inspected at the frontier and the usual authorities for road travel in the Yemen have never been needed by us. (This cannot be said of visiting diplomats.) And, with the exception of one moment last autumn, the arrangements which I have been able to make for diplomatic couriers to come to Taiz have worked satisfactorily.

4. But that is all that is good, and the other side of the picture is still coloured with all manner of difficulties. There is still the prohibition (agreed to by Her Majesty's Government in 1951) on the flying of the flag on the legation. There is still an almost complete ostracism of this legation because all Yemenis, officials or not, believe that it is the Imam's wish that none of them should have contact with us. There is still a close and obvious watch on this legation and its activities. The curfew restriction on movement to the Taiz airport remains. And movement throughout the Yemen, though never really restricted in my case, is still a very delicate question to tackle.

5. These are, in total, considerable disadvantages. But on balance I like to think that we are not too badly placed after so short a period as eighteen months. The situation could certainly be very much worse, when it is realised, as I have said above, that this is the first European legation to be established in the Yemen. The greatest disadvantage, as I see it, is that there is still so overwhelming and complete a fear of visiting this legation. It must be admitted that there are in Taiz relatively few Yemenis who, so to speak, deserve to be entertained here, and it is also a fact that it is not in the nature of Yemenis to visit foreigners or to consort with them: from their own personal point of view they are not inclined to do this unless it be to imbibe alcohol, which I have always refused absolutely to give to any of them. However, it is distressing that the feeling that the Imam does not want them to visit the legation should still be so universal. It must, I suppose, be borne, for I can think of no way of eliminating it.

6. The next point for review is the question of my having an audience with the Imam. This was deemed to be most important because the present form of Government in the Yemen is such that virtually all decisions are taken by the Imam personally. Contact with him was therefore felt to be one of the objects most

worthy of attainment. But, though I continually tried to attain it, from the moment I arrived in the Yemen, I must admit what amounts to an almost complete failure. The only two occasions on which I was able to speak to the Imam were when Sir Bernard Reilly visited Taiz in February this year, and when I exchanged a few words with him in Salif after his inauguration of the Salif Mineral Salt Company. On neither occasion was it possible to discuss political questions, and I have to report that at the end of my time at this post I still have no sort of relations with the Imam. In my opinion there are four main reasons for this failure. The first is the fact that as chargé d'affaires I have no right to an audience; this is appreciated by the Imam who therefore did not, in spite of my being the first representative of Her Majesty's Government to reside in his country, wish to receive me perhaps because he felt hurt that no Minister had been appointed. Secondly, there is the fact that the Imam's moodiness and illnesses lead him to adopt unusual attitudes, exemplified by his refusal last year to receive any one of the American, French and Egyptian Ministers to the Yemen. Thirdly, the fact that he does not trust himself to discuss politics with the representative of a foreign Government: he needs a long time to consider problems with which he is often unfamiliar. And fourthly, there is the fact that, knowing that anyone whom he does receive is thereby accepted by his people as a favoured person, he did not wish to make what would have been taken as a clear indication of goodwill towards Her Majesty's Government.

7. That it is unsatisfactory that I or my successor should have no real contact with the Imam is, I think, generally agreed. But how to overcome the Imam's unwillingness to receive the representative of Her Majesty's Government I do not really know. I can state, however, that though he may have had for many months a deep suspicion of the reasons for my being here, there are now no longer any signs of him being suspicious of me personally. What I have heard in the course of the past months convinces me of this, and is capped by an undeservedly eulogistic item about me, authorised by the Imam himself, which has appeared in the latest issue of the semi-official Taiz newspaper *Al Nasr*. Even so, there is nothing to show that such a lack of suspicion, if repeated in the case of any of my successors, will make it easier to obtain

an audience. The change which may, in my opinion, make the greatest difference in this matter is the appointment of a Minister to this legation.

8. My failure in the case of the Imam is, in part, offset by what cannot be deemed to be a failure in the case of my relations with most Yemeni officials. Here I have been able to make a number of friendships, suitably qualified, of course, as must inevitably be the case with such persons as Yemenis, and to better thereby, I hope, the chances of improvements in Anglo-Yemeni relations. With only a few opportunities to do so, I have been able to make friendly contacts with some of the Imam's brothers, notably Saif al Islam al Abdullah and Saif al Islam al Hassan. With Qadhi Mohamad al Amri, with whom I have done all my official business, I have been able to make friends, and in my relations with many other officials, senior and junior, and with other Yemenis, I have been able to build up some form of friendship. However, one group of persons has consistently avoided my endeavours, not necessarily on purpose but because they are very very seldom approachable. These are the important Saiyids and ignorant sycophants who daily surround the Imam at his court and who continually give him bad advice. Their unapproachability is due to their constant presence at the court, some few miles from the city of Taiz, which is naturally outside my sphere of activities. If these persons were approachable in their own homes, which in the present circumstances they are not, I might have been able to accomplish something. But so long as the Yemeni's personal dislike of contact with foreigners remains, there is really little that I can suggest to improve matters.

9. Before leaving this question of personal relationships there are two points which are, I think, worth mentioning. The first of these is the ultra-sensitive nature of most senior Yemenis: they are ready to feel hurt or insulted by a foreigner, in whose presence they usually suffer from an inferiority complex, at the least sign of disparagement of them themselves, their country or their way of life. This means that words must be carefully weighed even in the most ordinary of conversations. Secondly, I feel that the value of friendliness towards even the lowest classes of people, whose views, incidentally, are often listened to by their masters, cannot be overstressed. These persons, small merchants, drivers, messengers,

soldiers, &c., should be confident that their approaches will not be rebuffed, and though they are nearly always intent on obtaining money a kind word and a friendly attitude will never be amiss.

10. Coming now to the other aspects of Anglo-Yemeni relations, the questions arising out of the continued lack of settlement of the frontier between the Yemen and the Aden Protectorate loom largest. Some of these questions have arisen out of the disagreement between Her Majesty's Government and the Yemeni Government on where the actual frontier lies, others out of the Yemeni Government's previous refusals to recognise formally the existence of the Aden Protectorate, and others out of differences of opinion about the facts of particular incidents. A similarity in nearly every case has been the Yemeni Government's continuous interference in affairs of the Aden Protectorate. This has perhaps been most notable in the Khalifi area, and in areas adjoining it, where efforts have been made to suborn in various ways numbers of protectorate persons. In such cases as these I have made every effort to convince the Yemeni Government that they have been acting wrongly, but there seems to be little doubt that until the frontier is demarcated, which means until the Yemeni Government and Her Majesty's Government agree on the frontier, there is no real chance of convincing the Yemeni Government that what they claim are areas where the *status quo* must be respected, but which Her Majesty's Government state are not, are not in fact such areas. Until such time as this is possible, the Yemeni Government will continue to try to interfere whenever the Aden Government seek to establish a better administration in an area which they have not previously entered for this purpose. But in other areas, such as the Lahej Sultanate, the Dhala Amirate, the Upper Aulaqi Sultanate, the Audhali Sultanate and the Beihan Amirate, there is, in my opinion, no doubt that the Imam does recognise the *de facto*, but not the *de jure*, presence of the Aden Government and his interference in such places has been, in the past eighteen months, confined to the most unfriendly seizure of opportunities to foster difficulties confronting the Aden Government. In some cases, such as the raiding across the Yemeni-Beihani frontier and across the Yemeni-Mansuri frontier, he seems to have acted not only inimically, but senselessly as well. I feel that his wish to act in this sort

of instance arises directly from his claim that the Aden Protectorate is part of the Yemen, and that he is therefore the ultimate court of appeal whenever there are differences between persons, as in the case of the former Sultan of Lahej, or between tribes, as in the case of the Beihani Fagamis or the Laheji Mansuris. He believes that he cannot afford to let opportunities involving such differences go by without doing something to demonstrate that he claims to be the *de jure* sovereign of the whole area. In believing thus he will act, and it is at this stage that the real difficulties arise because his actions are always misguided and his officials on the frontier often act either with excessive zeal or outside their instructions. That they sometimes misinform him purposely is now my firm opinion, and this, I believe, is one of the reasons why small incidents sometimes assume an importance quite out of keeping with their origins.

11. I agree with the view that his Excellency the Governor of Aden has stated, that, however hard we try, we shall never persuade the Imam Ahmad to abandon his claims to the Protectorate. I do not think that he will ever withdraw these claims or formally recognise Her Majesty's Government's *de jure* position in the Aden Protectorate. However, if the frontier is demarcated then I do think that incidents involving Yemeni interference will be fewer. Unfortunately it has not been possible to take any steps towards the setting up of the Frontier Commission, agreed upon in the exchange of letters in 1951, and until it is possible the present unsatisfactory situation, where we claim that the Yemeni Government have agreed to a frontier line and they deny that they have ever done so, will continue.

12. But, though I am among the first to agree that the Imam has far too often behaved in an unfriendly manner in these matters, I cannot help stating that it has often been the case that neither he nor his officials actually created an incident. That he has not helped to resolve many incidents I will agree, and that he has often made them worse instead of better I will also agree, while repeating what I have said above, that it is his misguided efforts to demonstrate his claimed *de jure* sovereignty which lead to this. But, and I say this with all due respect, if the various Protectorate Rulers and tribes were thoroughly loyal to the Aden Government and were well-behaved, many of these difficult and tire-

some incidents would never arise. To give only a few examples, I cite the case of the flight of the former Sultan of Lahej which arose out of his misbehaviour, the case of the Upper Yafai Sultan's imprisonment which arose out of his misbehaviour and the case of the Mansuri disturbances which arose out of their misbehaviour and, perhaps, the cases of some protectorate persons who accept bribes from and leave hostages with the Yemenis because they do not feel they owe real loyalty to the Aden Government. In saying this I do not wish to try to excuse the Imam Ahmad's continually unfriendly attitude, but I do wish to make two points concerning the Aden Government's attitude in these matters. The first is that, because the Yemen is inevitably geographically where it is and because we have not so far been able to win the friendship of the Yemeni Government (and his Excellency the Governor of Aden feels that this cannot be done until there is a new Imam), we must face the fact that we should always try to resolve difficulties in the protectorate without having to request help from the Yemen. By this I mean to say that not only should the Aden Government not rely on a friendly attitude on the part of the Yemeni Government, but they should also try to overcome the inherent influence exerted on persons of the Aden Protectorate, particularly those in difficulties, by the Yemen, the neighbour Moslem State. The second point is that, in view of the tendency on the part of Yemeni officials to urge the Imam to support them and to prevent them from "losing face," as many difficulties as possible should be resolved by Aden Government and Yemeni Government officials working together as person with person, at the lowest level before any incident becomes serious. This may not be easy, because few Yemeni officials care to take decisions on their own, but I am sure that there are occasions when close co-operation can prevent incidents becoming more serious than they need be and when inter-governmental discussions can be avoided.

13. To seek for possible ways of trying to persuade the Imam to adopt a more friendly attitude towards Her Majesty's Government in these matters is a rather unrewarding pastime. Any suggestion that territory should be ceded to him is, and always has been, quite out of the question. Appeals to reason go unheeded. Personal persuasion is impossible since, as I have pointed out

above, personal contact is at present unattainable. More than favourable treatment in matters relating to trade and movement into Aden bring no corresponding gestures of friendship from the Imam, nor did his Excellency the Governor's hospitality to the Imam's brothers. Little scope therefore remains, and this emphasises, I feel, the basic fact that no real change for the better can be induced by Her Majesty's Government: we shall have to wait, perhaps in vain, for a spontaneous change by the Imam himself.

14. However, certain things do leave me with the impression that we can improve the situation without harm to ourselves. For instance, there is the question of anti-Imamic propaganda in Aden newspapers and among various groups in Aden. Everything possible should, in my opinion, be done to stifle such propaganda, since the Imam is most sensitive to it and will, as a result of all manner of ill-informed and untruthful information sent to him by untrustworthy individuals, believe that it is inspired by Her Majesty's Government. To avoid such a possibility, in truth such a certainty, these newspapers and groups should be prevented from publicising their views. The question of reciprocal action by the Imam, though worthy of consideration, pales into insignificance, in my opinion, beside the fact that as things have been for the past eighteen months the Imam can make the accusation that Her Majesty's Government have not done their best in these matters to demonstrate that they do wish to be friendly towards him. In addition, the question of refuge for fugitive Yemeni offenders is an underlying reason for the Imam's sense of grievance towards Her Majesty's Government. This is a difficult question to tackle, but I hope that something may emerge from the report which I submitted fairly recently on this question. Besides these possible reasons for the Imam's unwillingness to be friendly, there is the never-to-be-forgotten conviction that the Aden Government in one way or another assisted the revolutionaries who assassinated his father in 1948. Nothing can be done to persuade the Imam that this conviction is baseless.

15. But much can be done, I think, to make the Imam adopt a more realistic, but not for that reason more friendly, attitude in some respects. He has for too long been persuaded that all that he or his officials may ask for in the way of facilities for

trade, foreign exchange, arrangements for Yemeni aircraft to land in British territories and so on, will be granted without question. This has led, in some circumstances, to a mistaken belief that regulations made in the Aden Colony and Protectorate do not apply to Yemenis. For instance, there is special preference shown in the matter of transit dues payable by Yemeni vehicles passing through Lahej, there is no need for Yemenis entering the Aden Colony to have passports, until last September's incident when the Imam's agent was arrested there seemed to be no need to comply with the exchange control regulations about the export of currency notes, and so on. All these matters tend to foster the Imam's belief that he need not give in order to receive, and they tend to foster his officials' unhappy disregard for regulations. This is unfortunate. It is high time that the Imam, whose country is, perhaps incongruously, a full member of the United Nations Organisation, learned that foreign relations are conducted, usually, on a basis of reciprocity. The first lesson in this, given in the recent air-services proposals, is now being digested. If followed by further lessons, and if taken in conjunction with the realism injected into him by the recent economic sanctions imposed by the Aden Government, I am convinced that a better situation can develop. Once the Imam realises fully that it is he who will suffer when relations deteriorate, then he may pay more attention to the maintenance of good relations. Maybe it will take time for him to realise this, but in the long-run there must be advantage to Her Majesty's Government, and in the short-run argument is not difficult, since the Yemeni Government deny foreigners entry to their country, deny them permission to own land or houses, deny freedom of movement within the Yemen, deny foreign aircraft permission to land, and forbid the entry of nearly all foreign newspapers, to name only a few of their abnormal policies which, in 1953, can scarcely be deemed consistent with the standing of one of the United Nations. In effect they must learn that to be respected and to have friends they must behave, at least in some respects, as if they were a part of this world.

16. In summing up I think that it may be generally agreed that the main achievement of the past eighteen months has been that this legation has remained established in the Yemen. On looking back, and on consideration of further facts which have only

fairly recently come to my knowledge, it is quite clear that the position of this legation was far from secure throughout the summer last year, and that the Imam was seriously considering breaking diplomatic relations in the early autumn. However, that storm has been weathered and I now feel that a similar situation is unlikely to arise, without there being some really serious reason for a deterioration in Anglo-Yemeni relations. Unfortunately little has been accomplished in the matter of difficulties arising out of incidents in the Protectorate though some incidents may have been more speedily resolved than might have been the case if this legation had not existed. At any rate His Excellency the Governor of Aden has said that he considers this legation to be of value to him, and though it may perhaps always have been the case, his British officers actually present in the Western Aden Protectorate have been extremely few in number during the past eighteen months,

and this may have been possible because the legation has been here in Taiz. Besides this there has been a little instilling of realism into the Yemeni Government, and there has been a partially successful effort to win the friendship of many Yemenis. This does not perhaps, add up to very much, but in mitigation I must plead that the conditions which I have described at the beginning of this despatch have not made life easy and the primitive state of affairs in Taiz has not tended to simplify the single-handed administration of this legation, which, in the first five and a half months of this year, has had to cope with some 650 items of correspondence in and 700 out, and with a total of about 20,300 cypher groups in the same period.

17. I am sending a copy of this despatch to the Head of the British Middle East Office.

I have, &c.

M. B. JACOMB.

APPENDIX

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

EM 1012/1

LEADING PERSONALITIES IN THE YEMEN

Mr. Jacomb to Mr. Eden. (Received 19th February)

(No. 1. Confidential) *Taiz,*
Sir, *25th January, 1953.*

I have the honour to transmit herewith a report on leading personalities in the Yemen. Though due attention has, of course, been paid to accuracy in its compilation, the lack of previous information and the conditions which at present face this legation in its work may have led to a few inaccuracies. In particular it has not really been possible to state the exact ages of the various persons, since no Yemeni pays very much attention to dates. I hope, nevertheless, that this report is correct in essential details.

I have, &c.

M. B. JACOMB.

Enclosure

Leading Personalities in the Yemen

1. Ahmad al Nasir li Din Allah bin Yahya Hamid al Din.
2. al Hassan (Saif al Islam).
3. al Ali (Saif al Islam).
4. al Qasim (Saif al Islam).
5. al Abdullah (Saif al Islam).
6. al Ismail (Saif al Islam).
7. al Abbas (Saif al Islam).
8. Mohamad al Badr (Saif al Islam).
9. Abdul Karim al Amir (Saiyid).
10. Abdullah Abdul Karim (Saiyid).
11. Abdul Malik Ahmad al Amri (Qadhi).
12. Abdul Malik al Shahari (Saiyid).
13. Abdul Rahman Ahmad al Sayaghi (Qadhi).
14. Ahmad Abbas (Saiyid).
15. Ahmad Abdul Rahman al Shami (Saiyid).
16. Ahmad Ahmad al Sayaghi (Qadhi).
17. Ahmad al Hadharani (Qadhi).
18. Ahmad al Jarafi (Qadhi).
19. Ahmad Zabara (Saiyid).
20. Ali Ibrahim (Saiyid).
21. Ali Mohamad al Jabaly (Shaikh).
22. Ali Mohamad al Rubaidi (Shaikh).
23. Ghalib Ahmad al Jarmouzy.
24. Hussain al Halali (Qadhi).
25. Mohamad Abdullah al Amri (Qadhi).
26. Mohamad Abdullah al Shami (Qadhi).
27. Mohamad Abdul Rahman al Shami (Saiyid).
28. Mohamad Ahmad Pasha (Saiyid).
29. Mohamad Hussain al Amri (Qadhi).
30. Mohamad Ragheb Bey (Qadhi).
31. Saleh Musin.
32. Salim Hussain al Rummah (Shaikh).
33. Yahya bin Mohamad Abbas (Saiyid).

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1. Ahmad al Nasir li Din Allah bin Yahya Hamid al Din

Imam and King of the Yemen. Born in 1893, eldest surviving son of the Imam Yahya who was assassinated in San'a in 1948. Before the death of his father held the title of Crown Prince and was Viceroy of the Taiz (where he lived) and Hajja provinces and played a considerable part in the subjection of various tribes throughout the Yemen who contested his father's sovereignty. Succeeded his father as Imam on 3rd Jamad al Awal 1367 A.H. (March 1948) after organising the defeat of the revolutionaries, whose leaders he beheaded.

Since then he has lived in Taiz and has made that city the seat of his Government. In every sense an absolute monarch, retaining in his hands responsibility for every decision, large or small. He delegates practically no authority to his officials, whose views seldom really influence him. Is surrounded most of the time by a crowd of ignorant sycophants.

Has a robust constitution but suffers from various diseases at times. Has to some extent a fear of death but by means of a wide-spread intelligence system is soon aware of any sort of opposition, which he punishes extremely ruthlessly. Is respected rather than loved by his people, who at all times can write to him. Does not emphasise the differences between the two religious sects, Zaidi and Shafai, in the Yemen.

Has only once been out of the Yemen, to visit Aden in 1946. Is woefully ignorant of the state of the rest of the world and does not wish to conform with internationally recognised practices. Has a deep suspicion of foreign Governments and all foreigners. Has, nevertheless, effected more advances than his father, perhaps due in small part to his sensitivity to foreign, particularly Arab, criticism.

Is no lover of the British and is obsessed with the desire to gain control of the Aden Protectorate.

Has three sons, Saif al Islam Mohamad al Badr, al Abdullah and al Abbas, of whom the two last-named are still infants.

2. al Hassan (Saif al Islam)

Born in 1897, son of the late Imam Yahya. Viceroy of the province of San'a, where he lives, and to a great extent administrator of the whole of the northern part of the Yemen. Before his father's death was Viceroy of the province of Ibb. Has the title Prime Minister.

A fanatical Zaidi, living a simple life in San'a, strongly opposed to any changes. Has an obvious dislike of foreigners, who find life in San'a, where his authority is considerable, very difficult. Does not wish the Yemen to have more contact with the outside world.

Is not liked by the people, perhaps mainly because of his miserliness, but is respected for his energy and for his efforts to improve agriculture, which is his great love. Is on bad terms with all his brothers, but can nearly always influence the Imam, whom he wishes to succeed.

Does not always enjoy good health and went to Rome, via Aden and Egypt, in December 1952 to undergo an operation. This was his first journey abroad, apart from one pilgrimage to Mecca, and before it he was abysmally ignorant of conditions outside the Yemen.

Is not more anti-British than anti-foreign in general. Shows little interest in the question of Yemeni claims to the Aden Protectorate.

3. al Ali (Saif al Islam)

Born in 1904, son of the late Imam Yahya. Lives in San'a nearly all the time. Holds the title Minister of Education, but takes no active part in governmental affairs. Is a fair poet and a very heavy drinker, being not seldom seen inebriated. Has no political influence or ambitions.

4. al Qasim (Saif al Islam)

Born in 1906, son of the late Imam Yahya. Lives in San'a. Holds the title Minister of Communications, but takes practically no part in governmental affairs. Maintains good relations with his brothers, especially with Saif al Islam al Abdullah who exercises some influence over him.

Suffers from diabetes, for treatment of which he flew via Cairo and London to the United States of America in October 1952.

5. al Abdullah (Saif al Islam)

Born in 1907, son of the late Imam Yahya, whose favourite he was for some years, and in whose days he was Viceroy of the province of Hodaidah. Now lives in San'a and holds the title Minister of Foreign Affairs, but takes no part in the functions of this Ministry. Has, however, represented the Yemeni Government in the United Nations Organisation in 1947 and 1952.

Has spent a total of many months abroad in Egypt, Italy, France, the United States and the United Kingdom. Has learned much from these visits and favours a policy of progress and contact with the rest of the world. Is personally very ambitious, but has little or no influence with the present Imam.

Is sensible and quite popular in the Yemen and is on good terms with all his brothers except the Imam Ahmad and Saif al Islam al Hassan. In general not suspicious of foreigners, nor anti-British.

6. al Ismail (Saif al Islam)

Born in 1910, son of the late Imam Yahya and full brother of Saif al Islam al Abdullah, of whom he is very fond. Used to hold the title Minister of Health, but this was taken from him fairly recently because of his very heavy drinking, for which he has been imprisoned at least once. He is on bad terms with his brothers the Imam Ahmad and Saif al Islam al Hassan.

Leads a carefree life in San'a and is unconcerned at the state of affairs in the Yemen. Has no apparent political ambitions and has not been outside the Yemen.

7. al Abbas (Saif al Islam)

Born about 1918, son of the late Imam Yahya. Lives in San'a, where he spends most of his time in the company of Saif al Islam al Abdullah. Is popular and influential among the Zaidi tribes in the northern part of the Yemen and was mainly responsible for organising them on behalf of the present Imam Ahmad to overcome the revolutionaries in 1948. Took charge of the province of San'a in the absence of Saif al Islam al Hassan at the end of 1952.

Is a heavy drinker and not a very attractive person to meet. Has been out of the Yemen once, to visit Egypt, the Levant and Italy. Does not seem to hold strong ideas about the future of his country.

8. Mohamad al Badr (Saif al Islam)

Born in 1926, the eldest son of the present Imam Ahmad. Has the title Crown Prince and is nominally Commander-in-Chief of the Yemeni Army. Lived for a time in Hodaidah but has lived in San'a for a little less than a year and is making some efforts to win the support of the army and of the people there.

Is unintelligent and prone to accept the advice of the last person who speaks to him. But he spent some months in Egypt, the Levant and Italy and is in favour of a policy of progress. Has some ambition to succeed his father as Imam, but does not have much confidence in his ability to do so.

9. Abdul Karim al Amir (Saiyid)

Born in 1912. Lives in San'a. A fair writer who is editor of *Al Iman* newspaper, which is published in San'a. Has progressive ideas and is fairly intelligent, but has not been out of the Yemen. Is a close friend and ardent supporter of Saif al Islam al Abdullah.

10. Abdullah Abdul Karim (Saiyid)

Born in 1910. Lives in Taiz. Is a son-in-law of the present Imam Ahmad. Took part in the *coup d'Etat* in 1948 and was consequently imprisoned in Hajja immediately the Imam Ahmad assumed power. Was released in 1950 and at the end of that year was given the title Acting Chief of the Royal Cabinet, which title he still holds. Is usually much in the Imam Ahmad's favour and is fairly influential. Has not travelled abroad and has no apparent desire to see the present conditions in the Yemen altered in any way.

11. Abdul Malik Ahmad al Amri (Qadhi)

Born about 1918. Lives in Taiz. A cousin of Qadhi Mohamad Abdullah al Amri. Private secretary (and sole cypher clerk) to the Imam Ahmad, who trusts him with most of his secrets. Is also in charge of the pharmacy in the new hospital in Taiz. Enjoys the confidence and respect of the Imam Ahmad. Discreet and quiet: keeps very much to himself and does not appear to be very much liked. Though fairly intelligent he has no idea of what happens in the rest of the world and cannot be called progressive-minded.

12. Abdul Malik al Shahari (Saiyid)

Born about 1875. Lives in Hajja, where he is Viceroy of the province of Hajja. Comes from the Mansur family who provided, in the past, some of the Imams of the Yemen. A fanatical Zaidi who holds no brief for progressive ideas. A strict ruler. By virtue of his post is in charge of the political prisoners in Hajja. Has been outside the Yemen only on pilgrimage to Mecca, whence he used to go as the Yemeni Government official in charge of arrangements for Yemeni pilgrims.

13. Abdul Rahman Ahmad al Sayaghi (Qadhi)

Born in 1902. Lives in Sa'ada, in the very north of the Yemen, where he is Viceroy of the province of Sa'ada. Was in the past headmaster of the religious High School in San'a. An energetic and fairly honest official. A supporter of Saif al Islam al Abdullah, for whom he used to work when Saif al Islam al Abdullah was Viceroy of the Hodaidah province. Has not been out of the Yemen and has comparatively little influence with the Imam Ahmad.

14. Ahmad Abbas (Saiyid)

Born about 1913. Lives in Taiz. Has the title Director of Workshops in Taiz and is more or less in charge of the Yemeni Government's stores and engineering undertakings there. A staunch supporter of the Imam Ahmad since the *coup d'Etat* in 1948. Is in his favour and has his confidence and is one of

the few Yemenis who has access to him at almost any time. Has some influence with him. Drinks and is an unpleasant person to meet. Is not in favour of the employment of foreigners.

15. Ahmad Abdul Rahman al Shami (Saiyid)

Born about 1903. Lives in San'a. Elder brother of Saiyid Mohamad Abdul Rahman al Shami, and like him a nephew of the Imam Ahmad, whom he strongly supported during the *coup d'Etat* in 1948, though one of his sons, Mohamad, played a considerable part in the *coup* and was later imprisoned in Hajja for three years.

Has appointment of Director of Civil Aviation in San'a and is the representative of Saif al Islam al Hassan when visitors go to San'a. Is in the confidence of Saif al Islam al Hassan and is one of his most senior officials. A pleasant enough person to meet. Does not seem to have many ideas of his own.

16. Ahmad Ahmad al Sayaghi (Qadhi)

Born about 1905. Lives in Ibb, where he is Viceroy of the province of Ibb. Was previously a clerk working for Saif al Islam al Hassan, who has much confidence in him and with whom his relations are good. An egoist whose greed has brought him much wealth and land since his appointment to Ibb. Is a strong ruler and is not popular. Has not been outside the Yemen and has no knowledge of things modern and no wish to see any change in the present state of affairs in the Yemen.

17. Ahmad al Hadharani (Qadhi)

Born about 1888. Lives in Taiz. Is generally regarded as the jester at the court of the Imam Ahmad. A fair poet and a good narrator he can at all times collect a crowd of listeners. Spends much time near the Imam Ahmad whom he likes mostly because he is the source of his income. Cannot be said to influence the Imam Ahmad, but is rather violently anti-Western and at times may increase the Imam Ahmad's dislike of the British. His son played a small part in the *coup d'Etat* in 1948, and was imprisoned until 1951, but is now one of the clerks of the Crown Prince. Spent some years in Aden Colony and Protectorate. Has travelled widely: to the Hejaz, both in the days of King Hussain and recently, to Ethiopia, Eritrea, Egypt, India and Indonesia. Draws a small pension from the Government of the State of Hyderabad. An entirely untrustworthy and unlikeable person whose stupidity is matched by his cupidity.

18. Ahmad al Jarafi (Qadhi)

Born in 1882. Lives in San'a. Chief Judge of the Court of Appeal in San'a. A strong supporter of the present régime in the Yemen. Puritanical and conservative in outlook. Has a son, Qadhi Ismail Ahmad al Jarafi, who is a secretary in the Yemeni Legation in Cairo.

19. Ahmad Zabara (Saiyid)

Born about 1910. Lives in Taiz. Is a son-in-law of the present Imam Ahmad. At present Chief of the group of religious Judges at the Court of the Imam Ahmad. Though from one of the leading families of the Yemen he has little personality and is rather unpopular. Has not travelled abroad and is very reactionary in his approach to all questions.

20. Ali Ibrahim (Saiyid)

Born in 1878. Lives in San'a. Officer commanding the troops in the province of San'a, but has no military background or knowledge. Prior to the first world war was a member of the Turkish Parliament, but has not been out of the Yemen since the

Turks left the country. Is the father of the present Yemeni Minister in London. Is not politically ambitious or active.

21. Ali Mohamad al Jabaly (Shaikh)

Born in Hodaidah in 1902. Worked in his youth as a servant and office-boy for a Greek coffee merchant there. Is recognised as the Yemeni Government's trade agent in Aden, where he is usually resident. Is in effect the sole purchasing agent for the Yemeni Government, handles all their foreign exchange matters, recruits foreign employees for them, and also provides a link between them and the outside world through his office in Aden.

Is a wealthy and active merchant, and directs the affairs of the Yemen Navigation Company, the Salif Salt Works and a cotton-growing enterprise in the Yemen. Has offices in Hodaidah, Asmara and Addis Ababa as well as Aden, and has agents in the Levant, Egypt, Italy and the United States of America. Has very close contacts with Italy. Has travelled widely and is well versed in the ways of the world. Is quite the most active person connected with the Yemeni Government and has considerable influence with the present Imam (but does not get on well with Qadhi Mohamad Abdullah al Amri). Has a predominant interest in Hodaidah, where his two brothers Saleh and Salim run his affairs for him.

Is a likeable person, with progressive ideas, but always intent on making money. Is sometimes inclined to harm Aden-Yemeni relations when faced with commercial difficulties, but remains on the whole outside politics.

22. Ali Mohamad al Rubaidi (Shaikh)

Born about 1905. Lives in Rahida, the customs post on the Aden-Taiz road, where he is the officer in charge of the customs. Since the end of 1952 has been the Imam Ahmad's second recognised trade agent in Aden. Corrupt but likeable. Has gained the Imam Ahmad's favour but at the same time incurred the dislike of Shaikh Ali Mohamad al Jabaly, the Imam Ahmad's first trade agent in Aden. Not really a very important person, but one who comes in contact, as a Yemeni Government official, with the outside world. Not entirely anti-British.

23. Ghalib Ahmad al Jarmouzi

Born about 1906. Lives in Taiz. A descendant of Turkish parents. Was previously an officer in the Yemeni army in San'a. Now Director of Civil Aviation in Taiz and also officer in charge of the Government guest-houses there.

Has practically no contact with the Imam Ahmad, but arranges everything in connection with civil aviation, when he is ordered to do so. A heavy drinker of cheerful but not altogether pleasant character. Spends much time gathering, and passing on to the Imam Ahmad, information about the activities of the foreigners in Taiz.

24. Hussain al Halali (Qadhi)

Born in 1887. Lives in San'a but also has a house in Taiz. Held various important posts during the reign of the late Imam Yahya and before that under the Turks. Stood by the present Imam during the *coup d'Etat* in 1948 and was afterwards made Viceroy of the Hodaidah province and then Chief of the Royal Cabinet, a title which he still retains.

Went to Egypt and the Levant in 1951 for medical treatment and also as a delegate to the Arab League. Whilst in Egypt incurred the present Imam's displeasure by publicly avowing his support of constitutional government. On returning to the Yemen in 1952 he retired, mainly at his own request, to San'a. Now plays little or no part in governmental affairs but sometimes advises Saif al Islam Mohamad al Badr.

Favours establishment of a properly organised administration and a progressive policy. By no means unfriendly towards Her Majesty's Government but prefers close contact with other Arab States rather than with European States.

25. Mohamad Abdullah al Amri (Qadhi)

Born in 1912, eldest son of the late Qadhi Abdullah al Amri who was the Minister of the late Imam Yahya and with whom he was assassinated. After the accession of the Imam Ahmad in 1948 was made Deputy Foreign Minister and, in the absence of Qadhi Hussain al Halali, has been the only Minister in Taiz. He is in charge of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is the only channel in Taiz for official business. At the same time he is the Imam's "general factotum" and concerns himself with all sorts of affairs of State, particularly those involving the foreign employees of the Yemeni Government. In spite of these official duties he has very little authority and must refer most matters to the Imam Ahmad for a decision.

Went to the United States of America in 1947 as a member of the first Yemeni delegation to the United Nations Organisation and in the same year toured the United States and Europe with Saif al Islam al Abdullah. Has been to the United Kingdom more than once, the last time being in 1950 at the head of the Yemeni delegation for the Anglo-Yemeni conference that year. Has also visited Egypt, the Levant and Pakistan.

His fairly numerous voyages abroad and his contacts with foreign statesmen at the United Nations Organisation's meetings and at the Arab League's meetings have broadened his mind considerably. Is very progressive but has usually relatively little influence with the Imam Ahmad. Is in fact most disappointed that so little advance has been made in the Yemen and has fairly recently tended to stop pressing for progress, for the employment of foreign technical experts and for the establishment of diplomatic relations with other countries, all of which were his aims.

Is intelligent and sensible and not unsympathetic or unfriendly. But his position is difficult and he cannot always do what he sees is right. Favours close friendship with the United Kingdom, but perhaps closer friendship with the United States of America.

26. Mohamad Abdullah al Shami (Qadhi)

Born in 1877. Lives in Beidha, which is his seat as Viceroy of the province of Beidha. Very well-known to the officials of the Aden Government because he is the appointed Yemeni Frontier Officer with whom frontier matters are discussed.

Usually well in the Imam Ahmad's favour and very active in putting the Imam's point of view to the people of the Aden Protectorate. Like many Yemeni officials, however, he prefers to remain away from Taiz, where, on his occasional visits, he is never at ease. Went to London in 1939 as a member of the Yemeni delegation to the Palestine Round-Table Conference and again in 1950 as a member of the Yemeni delegation for the Anglo-Yemeni conference that year. Has also visited France, Italy and Egypt.

A Zaidi of strong religious convictions and usually conservative ideas, he appears to be convinced of the justice of the Yemen's claim to the Aden Protectorate.

27. Mohamad Abdul Rahman al Shami (Saiyid)

Born in 1922. Is a nephew of the Imam Ahmad. Works in the Yemeni Ministry of Foreign Affairs and has the title Secretary-General. Went to Egypt in 1949 as member of the Yemeni delegation to the Arab League and again in 1950 and 1951.

Has visited the Levant as well. Went to New York as member of the Yemeni delegation to the United Nations Organisation at the end of 1952.

Of modest character, popular and respected. Has progressive ideas and has learned much from his travels. Is, however, relatively insignificant and uninfluential, in spite of the fact that he has occasionally deputised for Qadhi Mohamad Abdullah al Amri.

28. Mohamad Ahmad Pasha (Saiyid)

Born about 1888. Lives in Taiz. Governor of the town and district of Taiz. Is a descendant of the Mutawakkil family who provided, in the past, seven Imams of the Yemen. On account of differences with the present Imamic family, the Hamid al Din family, his own family moved some time ago from San'a to Taiz and joined the Shafai sect of Islam. During the Turkish occupation members of the family were given good posts and the father of Saiyid Mohamad was awarded the title of Pasha which the family then adopted as their family name.

Has never liked the Hamid al Din family and took part in the *coup d'Etat* in 1948, and his eldest son, Saiyid Ahmad, became Minister of Agriculture in the Government of the revolutionaries. But he bribed the court which tried him, after the accession of the Imam Ahmad, for treason, and he was acquitted, and later given the post of Governor of Taiz.

Of very cheerful and engaging character, but corrupt, cunning and very selfish. Despite his dislike of the Imam Ahmad he cannot be relied upon to help to strengthen Anglo-Yemeni relations because he fears for his own life. Is for most of the time a rather sycophantic adviser to the Imam Ahmad.

Has visited Egypt and the Levant, but is by no means intelligent or very broad-minded.

29. Mohamad Hussain al Amri (Qadhi)

Born about 1907. Lives in Hodaidah, where he is Viceroy of the province of Hodaidah. An uncle of Qadhi Mohamad Abdullah al Amri.

Under his direction Hodaidah now has a piped water supply and will soon have a good electricity supply. Is not at all adverse to progress, but is very much under the control of the Imam Ahmad. This leads him to be at times more despotic than he might really wish to be.

Is not much disliked in his province, and is rather dull and unintelligent. Is also corrupt, and probably anti-British. Has only once been outside the Yemen, on a visit to Eritrea.

30. Mohamad Ragheb Bey (Qadhi)

Born in 1872. Lives in San'a. A Turk who held various posts in the Yemen during the Turkish occupation, and also served in diplomatic posts in Europe. After the Turkish evacuation returned to Turkey for a short time, came to Aden and then returned to the Yemen at the request of the late Imam Yahya, who made him his Foreign Minister. He retained this office until soon after the accession of the present Imam, but has since been given no place in governmental affairs.

Is a civilised and intelligent old man, able to speak French. Is respected, but is prevented from leaving the country as he wishes. One of his daughters is married to Saif al Islam al Qasim and another was married to the present Imam but after divorce married a Syrian dentist who used to work in San'a.

31. Saleh Muhsin

Born about 1920. Lives in Taiz. Was one of the servants of the present Imam Ahmad before his accession to the Imamate. Took part in the *coup d'Etat* in 1948 but was pardoned by the Imam Ahmad,

who retained him at his court in the elevated (and meaningless) position of Chief of Protocol at the Royal Palace.

In 1950 was sent to Asmara as the Imam's representative or trade agent, but returned to Taiz before the handing over of Eritrea to the Ethiopian Government in 1952. Then reverted to his life at court where he has considerable influence on the Imam Ahmad, whom he can see whenever he wishes.

Has visited Egypt and the Levant and would like to see advances made in the Yemen. Is a good friend of Shaikh Ali Mohamad al Jabaly, but without the energy of that person and a good deal less intelligent than he.

32. Salim Hussain al Rummah (Shaikh)

Born about 1918. Lives in Beidha, where he is Shaikh of the town and its surrounding district, having just recently succeeded his late father. Is also the officer in charge of the customs in Beidha and the right-hand man of Qadhi Mohamad Abdullah al Shami, the Viceroy of the province of Beidha. Respected by the local people and also by the officials of the Aden Government with whom he has much contact over frontier matters. Not an opponent of progress nor very anti-British.

33. Yahya bin Mohamad Abbas (Saiyid)

Born in 1877. Lives in San'a. Is Chief Judge of the Supreme Court of the province of San'a. Very backward in his ideas and puritanical in his approach to most questions. Has not been out of the Yemen.